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DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORAL SKILLS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM THROUGH ICTs AND AUTHENTIC MATERIALS

EL DESARROLLO DE LAS COMPETENCIAS ORALES EN LENGUA INGLESA A TRAVÉS DE NUEVAS TECNOLOGÍAS Y MATERIALES AUTÉNTICOS

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ABSTRACT

We live in a global world where communication demands have dramatically changed in the past decades and where English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has acquired a central position and become a lingua franca. The Spanish educational system has tried to adapt to this new reality, but this effort seems inadequate as it can be inferred from our results, less satisfying than those of other neighbouring countries, especially regarding Spanish students' oral skills. Taking this situation into consideration, we decided to make a small-scale contribution to deal with this matter. As a result, our proposal consists on an innovation experience which intends to modify this tendency by introducing new materials and new tasks in the EFL classroom. Materials are one of the key elements that interact in the EFL classroom, they are easily controllable and, in our opinion, have the potential to drive change from the bottom of the system. Our proposal is thus structured as a prototypical innovation project where, however, our focus is mainly on the design of the implementation phase –our aim is not to prescribe a given teaching plan or syllabus, but rather to provide teachers with the right tools to better enforce the teaching of oral skills. For that reason, once the rationale of this innovation experience is clearly defined, we go on to trace a suitable selection of materials, activities and method, as well as a potential action program, in order to set example and become a source of inspiration for other teachers wanting to drive change. The specific example that we here provide, based on a motivating use of authentic materials and ICTs, is also tested in what we could consider a quasi-experimental pilot study in order to predict its actual potential and in order to encourage replication and even further extension. Results of the pilot study show that our proposal not only has the potential to promote EFL students' oral skills, but that it also has the potential to improve students' motivation levels. This is how, in the end, we close the cycle and lead the way towards a lifelong learning model.

Key words: oral skills in EFL; innovation experience; authentic materials and ICTs; lifelong learning.

RESUMEN

Vivimos en un mundo globalizado en el que nuestras necesidades comunicativas han cambiado de forma radical en las últimas décadas y en las que el inglés como lengua extranjera ha adquirido una posición central y se han convertido en lingua franca. El sistema educativo español ha intentado adaptarse a esta nueva realidad, pero este esfuerzo no parece ser suficiente como puede verse en nuestros resultados, que son peores que los de nuestros países vecinos, sobre todo cuando éstos se refieren a las competencias orales de nuestros alumnos. Teniendo en cuenta esta situación, decidimos hacer una pequeña contribución para enfrentarnos a esta situación y, por ello, nuestra propuesta consiste en una experiencia de innovación que intenta modificar esta tendencia introduciendo nuevos materiales y nuevas actividades en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera. Los materiales son uno de los elementos clave que interactúan en el aula, son fáciles de controlar y, en nuestra opinión, tienen el potencial de liderar el cambio desde las bases del sistema. Nuestra propuesta, por tanto, está estructurada como un proyecto de innovación tipo en el que, sin embargo, nos centramos sobre todo en el diseño de la fase de implementación. Nuestro objetivo no es el de prescribir una programación o un plan de estudio en concreto, sino el de proveer a nuestros profesores de las herramientas adecuadas para trabajar con las competencias orales de una forma más adecuada. Por ese motivo, una vez definimos claramente el porqué de nuestra experiencia de innovación, el estudio se dedica a guiarnos en una óptima selección de materiales, actividades y método, así como de un potencial programa de acción para intentar dar ejemplo y convertirse en una fuente de inspiración para otros profesores que quieran liderar el cambio. El ejemplo concreto que aparece en este estudio, un ejemplo basado en el uso de materiales auténticos y TICs de forma motivadora, llega incluso a analizarse en lo que podríamos considerar un estudio piloto quasi-experimental para poder predecir su potencial y para animar a otros a que lo repliquen o a que lo amplíen incluso. Los resultados de este estudio piloto demuestran que nuestra propuesta no sólo tiene el potencial de promover las competencias orales en el aula de lengua inglesa, sino que además tiene el potencial de mejorar los niveles de motivación de nuestros alumnos. De esta forma conseguimos una propuesta redonda que consigue llegar a fomentar el aprendizaje a lo largo de nuestras vidas.

Palabras clave: competencias orales en el inglés como lengua extranjera; experiencia de innovación; materiales auténticos y TICs; aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida.

INTRODUCTION

Communication demands have dramatically changed over the past decades. Whereas in the past most of our exchanges remained local and did not usually entail any linguistic problems, we now need to communicate with people from other countries who speak other languages on a regular basis. In this global scene, the English language has acquired a central position by becoming the world's lingua franca (Ethnologue, 2016), which is not only necessary in order to communicate with native speakers, but also in order to communicate with people from all over the world.

Given the current importance of learning a foreign language, especially English, all European countries have generalized the teaching of foreign languages at school in the past decades – the European Union, in fact, encourages all citizens to speak at least two foreign languages of those spoken in all member states. Nevertheless, results across Europe in this area are quite diverse and, whereas there are countries where a great percentage of the population is able to effectively use a foreign language –mostly English (Eurobarometer 386, 2012)–, in countries like Spain we seem to be quite far from that scenario.

Our detrimental situation, especially when compared with other European counterparts, seems not be just a mere perception –it can also be corroborated in several studies and surveys where Spanish students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) not only score lower than students from other countries, but they actually self-assess themselves worse (see for example Comajoan [2010], Eurobarometer 243 or CIS Barometer [2014]). Particularly dramatic to this respect is the fact that our students tend to feel the weakest regarding their oral skills, skills which are of an utmost importance when it comes to efficiently communicate in a foreign language. The question thus is: are we doing something wrong? Is the system failing to prepare students to adequately communicate in English?

The truth is that, even if there may be some sociocultural aspects which could negatively affect the learning of English as a foreign language in Spain, our educational system is mainly to blame in this area, as we seem to have a misconceived approach to the teaching of foreign languages. This is again not only a generalized perception, but also a fact proved by research, as the average language classroom in Spain has been repeatedly observed to be teacher-centreed, highly dependent on the use of generic textbooks, mainly concerned about the teaching of grammar and vocabulary over the teaching of communicative skills and generally not able to match students' real needs (Morales Gálvez Arrimadas Gómez, Ramírez Nueda, López Gayarre and Ocaña Villuendas, 2000).

It is for this reason that we decided to make a contribution to the area of language learning by attempting to change this reality, by attempting to change the way we approach the teaching of foreign languages through not huge but symbolic changes –in this case, the use of different materials and activities in order to eventually change methods, roles and even objectives.

The proposal we here present could be described as an innovation project or even as an innovation experience –that is, a project which tries to introduce changes that are less complex, more sporadic and more specific regarding their aims than those proposed by De la Torre (1997). This innovation experience attempts to outline a reliable framework for teachers who want to improve the way they teach English and, more specifically, the way they foster students' oral skills. With this idea in mind, the project proposes the following:

- An analysis of the areas that affect language learning and the potential role of motivation, as well as new methods and materials in order to introduce change in the Spanish language classroom.
- The provision of tools for teachers to adequately select materials and carefully design activities to better enforce the teaching of oral skills in a motivating way.
- A specific example of how change can be introduced through several activities based on the motivating use of ICTs and authentic materials, together with a pilot study to test its potential beneficial effects and its limitations.
- A road map to guide teachers towards the design of an even more comprehensive innovation process and to guide students towards a lifelong learning model.

Chapter number one would correspond thus to the first objective of this project –that is, the understanding of which factors influence the language learning process. This chapter is subdivided in four subsections, which attempt to provide us with all the information we need to take into account in order to design an effective innovative proposal on language learning: 1) a revision of literature on the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) in order to better understand how students learn and what factors are usually involved; 2) a broader analysis one of these factors, motivation, given its many benefits in the learning process and given the chances it provides to easily foster it; 3) an analysis of the role of the teacher in SLA, who is mainly responsible of controlling the learning situation and the method used; and 4) an analysis of the role of materials used, the field where we would especially like to work and where we want change to begin.

The last subsection of chapter one is closely related to chapter number two, as we cannot talk about effective materials unless we specify the goal we want to attain with them. In this

case, as we have already anticipated, the main aim of this project is to improve learners' oral skills in English, an area where Spanish students seem to be quite weak when compared with other neighbouring countries. For that reason, in this chapter we not only analyse in detail the possible causes of this situation, but we also revise the literature on the field of effective teaching of oral skills –namely listening comprehension, speaking/oral production and pronunciation– in order to provide teachers with the right tools to design effective activities using those carefully selected materials we were talking about in chapter number one.

Chapter number three could be considered the culmination of all this previous research, as it is where our actual contribution to the field is shaped. Although we can consider the previous chapters a contribution per se –they can potentially provide teachers with the right tools to innovate themselves in their own context–, we consider that chapter number three is more of a tangible proposal to this respect, as it presents an actual example of how innovation can be introduced in the language classroom in order to improve learners' oral skills in a motivating way. This chapter is thus subdivided in three sections: 1) a section where the term "innovation" is broadly discussed in order to clarify the type of contribution we want to make; 2) a section in which the key ingredients of an innovation project are described; and 3) a section where our actual project is explained. The last section is obviously the most relevant one of this chapter and it is again subdivided in four subsections: 1) a subsection where the rationale and the appropriateness of the project are discussed; 2) a subsection where we describe the method that guided our selection and design of materials and tasks; 3) a subsection where the actual materials and tasks proposed are explained and justified, preceded by a brief revision of literature on the selected materials; and 4) a subsection portraying an example of implementation of our proposal, which serves to provide reliability to it. The latest subsection is structured as a quasi-experiment –i.e. description of the context, research procedures (or method), results and discussion, and assessment (or conclusion).

Finally, chapter number four serves as a closing chapter where the implications of this proposal are analysed and where objective number four is fulfilled. First of all, we can find a section where the limitations of this project are described in an attempt to guide future research towards even more solid contributions. Nevertheless, the idea of guaranteeing further learning departing from our proposal is better symbolized by the following section, where a connection between this project and further autonomous learning is established. This section, subdivided in three subsections, presents the concept of autonomous learning, explains how it can be promoted –and how it was actually promoted in our innovation project– and contemplates its connection with motivation, a learning factor that we considered key in the development of our proposal. It is this way we close the circle in order to offer a round proposal: a proposal which

relies on solid theoretical principles, which attempts to introduce simple but permeable changes in the education system and which intends to ultimately promote a life-long learning model so that Spanish EFL learners can eventually compete with their European counterparts.

1 DIFFERENT FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESS

1.1 How do we learn a foreign language?

1.1.1 Key issues in SLA Research

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is one of the most important areas of language learning research which refers to the "processes through which someone acquires one or more second or foreign languages" (Nunan, 2001:87), or to, as Ellis (1985) puts it, the "subconscious or conscious processes by which a language other than the mother tongue is learnt in a natural or a tutored setting. It covers the development of phonology, lexis, grammar and pragmatic knowledge but has been largely confined to morphosyntax" (p.6). If we pay attention to the latter definition, some relevant issues on the area will need to be clarified. Ellis, for example, talks about subconscious and conscious learning processes, which correspond to Krashen's differentiation between "acquisition" –natural, intuitive, and subconscious process to develop linguistic skills– and "learning" –conscious process to develop linguistic skills, usually associated to formal instruction. However, and since we will stick to Ellis' definition, Krashen's differentiation between acquisition and learning will not apply here unless we specifically refer to Krashen's terminology. On the other hand, when he mentions the settings in which the language can be learnt (natural or tutored setting), another crucial differentiation in language learning needs to be made –whether the language is learnt as a second language (in a context where the target language is the main language spoken by the community) or as a foreign language (in a context where the target language is not the main language spoken by the community). In this dissertation, nevertheless, when we refer to L2 (or second language), we are setting aside this differentiation, assuming that we call it L2 because it was the second language that students acquired after their first language (or L1). When this differentiation will need to be made, we will use the abbreviations SL (language is learnt as a second language) and FL (language is learnt as a foreign language).

In order to know how an L2 is learnt, we need to study how the L1 was learnt and how this could influence the learning of the L2 –i.e. linguistic habits in the L1 and language interference influence the acquisition of the L2. In fact, most relevant authors on the SLA field based their research on First Language Acquisition (FLA) studies or at least inspired their work on them. From all the relevant FLA studies, three areas should be pointed out: 1) Behaviorism –a psychological theory which believes that learning is a process of habit formation; 2) Innatism –linked to Chomsky's work (1965, 1980, 1981), which assumes that there is some kind of innate predisposition to language learning among humans; and 3) Cognitivism –an area which attempts to explain how language and cognition interrelate. Interest in SLA first arose in the 1960s, a moment in which a shift in language learning research occurred and in which we

moved from a focus on the teaching process (language teaching methods) to a focus on the learning process (SLA) (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). However, the area of SLA was not only influenced by the developments on the area of first language acquisition –it was also influenced by the study of learners' errors and by theories which tried to explain why we learn things in a certain order (Nunan, 2001).

Second language acquisition as we know it nowadays depends on the interaction of certain factors. Stern (1983), for example, proposed a framework that presents five different factors which interplay in SLA and their relationship among them. These were: learner factors/characteristics –i.e. age or cognitive, affective and personality characteristics¬–, social context –i.e. sociolinguistic, sociocultural and socioeconomic factors–, learning process –i.e. strategies, techniques, and mental operations–, learning conditions –i.e. foreign language learning vs. second language learning–, and learning outcomes –i.e. L2 competence/proficiency. Meanwhile, Ellis (1985) proposed several hypothesis which should govern any SLA theory and which reflect the different factors involved in SLA processes, namely situation factors, input, learner differences, learner processes and linguistic output:

- General
    - H1 – SLA follows a natural sequence of development.
    - H2 – The learners' interlanguage is composed of a system of variable rules at every level of development.
- Situation
    - H3 – Situational factors influence in an indirect way the rate of development and the level of proficiency achieved as well as the order of development.
    - H4 – Situational factors are the primary causes of variability in language-learner language.
- Input
    - H5 – Input that is adjusted as a result of negotiation of meaning is one of the main determinants of the sequence, order and rate of development.
- Learner Differences
    - H6 – Affective learner differences influence the rate of development and the proficiency achieved, but not the sequence or order of development.
    - H7 – The learner's L1 affects the order of development but not the sequence of development. The degree of markedness of certain features of the L1 explains the possibility of transfer.

- Learner Processes
    - H8 – Interlanguage development occurs as the learners use procedural knowledge to construct discourse.
    - H9 – Interlanguage development occurs as the product of the learner's universal grammar, which makes some rules easier to learn than others.
- Output
    - H10 – Language-learner language consists of formulaic speech and utterances created in a creative way.
    - H11 – Language-learner language is variable and dynamic, but also systematic.

Basing ourselves on Ellis' (1985) work, we are now going to further explore the different factors that influence SLA in order to gain a better understanding of this process and in order to better understand its pedagogical implications.

1.1.1.1 Input and interaction

In this section, we are going to discuss how input and interaction affect SLA but, before we get into this, we should clearly define these key concepts. In order to explain what input refers to, we will take Ellis' (1985) definition, who states that it is "the language that is addressed to the L2 learner either by a native speaker or by another learner" (p.127). In other words, it is the language that is available to the learner[1]. It is necessary that we separate this concept from that of intake, because we must understand that not all input is internalized –we use the term intake to refer to "the part of the input that is processed or 'let in'" (Ellis, 1985:127). Finally, we will also resort to Ellis to define interaction, which according to him refers to the "discourse jointly constructed by the learner and his interlocutors" (p.127) that can shape input and allow SLA.

The first thing we must consider about input directed to language learners is how this is conformed, its nature. Studies have shown that language directed toward linguistically deficient individuals tends to be characterized by a certain modification of speech on the part of NSs (or proficient NNSs). Ferguson (1971 –cited in Gass and Selinker, 2008) divided it into two categories: baby talk (also called motherese or caretaker speech) to refer to the speech directed towards young children, normally when they are learning their L1, and foreigner talk to

[1] It must be pointed out that Ellis only talks about native speakers (NSs) and language learners because he did not consider that there could be anything in between –learners could either receive correct input from NSs or not such correct input from non-native speakers (NNSs), who were also learning the language. Nevertheless, nowadays we consider that L2 students can also receive relevant and correct input from proficient NNSs.

refer to the speech directed towards linguistically deficient NNSs when they are learning an L2. In the case of baby talk, studies have shown that linguistic input targeted at L1 learners is quantitatively different from input targeted to linguistically competent adults (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), which does not mean that it is ill-formed as some authors have put it, but simply more adjusted so that learners can better understand it: it contains less complex structures, redundancy, adjustments in pronunciation and a tune, intonation and pitch which are adapted to the perceptive sensitivity of the child (Ellis, 1985). On the other hand, the term "foreigner talk" has been coined to refer to the simplified registers used by native speakers when addressing non-native speakers. Simplifications in foreigner talk can be of two types according to Ellis (1985) and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991): linguistic adjustments and conversational adjustments. Linguistic adjustments involve the areas of phonology (i.e. slower rate of speech, more use of stress and pauses, more use of full forms and so on), morphology and syntax (i.e. fewer words per utterance, less complex utterances, more regularity among other things), and semantics (i.e. fewer idiomatic expressions, lower token-type ratio, or more overt marking of semantic relations). Such linguistic adjustments make some say that this is an ungrammatical variety of language given its omissions, expansions and replacements –i.e. the introduction of tags like "yes?" or "Ok?", the formation of negative sentences using the word "no" and so on. However, some other people believe that it is well-formed language but modified, or at least that this language can be at times grammatical, at times not grammatical. Regarding conversational adjustments, these result from a process of negotiation of meaning and have to do with topic management and choice –i.e. conversations between NSs and NNSs are more oriented to the "here and now" and there tends to be a wider range of topic options for the NNS to choose from–, and the management of the interactional structure –i.e. the use questions to engage NNSs and to serve as comprehension checks, the use of stress or pauses before topic words, or the use of decomposition. The functions of foreigner talk are varied: it promotes communication, it establishes an affective bond between NSs and NNSs, it serves as an implicit teaching mode and it marks the role relationship between speakers (Hatch, 1983 – cited in Ellis, 1985).

Another important issue that we must consider is the role of input in SLA, which has changed over history depending on the approach to SLA that dominated at each time (Gass and Selinker, 2008; Ellis, 1985). In the behaviorist theory, for instance, the learner was considered a "language-producing machine" which needed stimuli (input) and feedback in order to acquire the L2. For that reason, input at this time was considered crucial for SLA and held a central position –SLA was supposed to involve the imitation of the language that learners were surrounded with. The nativist theory, on the other hand, gave more importance to the learners' internal processing mechanisms, minimizing the role of input, which was merely seen "as a

trigger that activates the internal mechanisms" (Ellis, 1985:128). According to Chomsky (1965 – cited in Ellis, 1985), it would be impossible for students to learn the language just by receiving input (it is sometimes degenerate), so an inner ability that allows them to learn it must be assumed. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that Krashen (1985), who is a nativist as well, dedicated one of his hypotheses to input, with which he explained how learners moved from one level of development to another. Finally, the interactionist theory stands for an intermediate position in which SLA is defined as an interaction between input and learners' internal processing mechanisms: "The learners' processing mechanisms determine and are determined by the nature of input. Similarly, the quality of the input affects and is affected by the nature of the internal mechanism" (Ellis, 1985:128). Within this point of view, it is interesting to consider Ellis' (1985) work, who analyses the effects of input and interaction on the route and rate of SLA. Regarding how input and interaction affect the route of SLA, he departs from the belief that even if the route of SLA is mainly explained in terms of universal processing mechanisms, conversation growth can also affect this –i.e. students, for instance, may learn formulaic speech that is beyond their level in order to use it in routinized interactions, or they may construct language by borrowing chunks of speech from the preceding discourse. The availability of comprehensible input which contains certain language forms over others can also determine the language forms that may be acquired before and after, although we must remember once more that not all input becomes intake. On the other hand, Ellis (1985) believes that input and interaction affect the rate of SLA regarding its quantity and quality –that is, the higher quantity of input and interaction and the better its quality, the faster the development of the L2.

Ellis (1985) seems not to be the only one to consider interaction when trying to explain how input affects SLA. In fact, many authors agree that input should be coupled with interaction in order to better analyse its effects, as interaction is not only necessary for practice, but also to crack the code (Gass and Selinker, 2008). In the same line, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) state that learners must not be passive recipients of input made comprehensible to them by others, but that they should rather obtain their comprehensible input by taking part in a negotiation of meaning process.

The importance of negotiated interaction to SLA has been shown in a series of studies and has inspired a whole school of research –i.e. see Gass (1990), Gass and Varonis (1994) and Varonis and Gass (1985), cited in Warschauer (1998). This school made a number of claims about the relationship between interaction and negotiation and language learning, which mainly revolved around the idea that interactional modifications due to negotiation of meaning facilitated language learning by making input more comprehensible, by drawing attention to certain L2 forms and by providing negative evidence to learners.

At this point, it would be necessary to further study the concept of "negotiation of meaning", which Jepson (2005) defines as the "cognitive process that speakers use to better understand one another, that is, to increase the comprehensibility of language input" (p.79). Long (1996 – cited in Gass and Selinker, 2008) explains the importance of negotiation of meaning in this way:

> Negotiation for meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers interactional adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways (p.349).

Negotiation of meaning follows certain routines, which can be translated into four different stages (Worajittiphon, 2012): 1) trigger, which refers to the portion of the interlocutor's speech that causes a comprehension problem; 2) indicator, which refers to the signaling of this comprehension problem; 3) response, which refers to the response sent by the speaker to request for clarification; and 4) reaction to response, which may solve and complete the negotiation. Taking into account how this is done, we can easily see the positive outcomes of engaging in negotiation of meaning, as it may raise speakers' awareness of target language forms and it can result in modified interaction achieved by repair moves, which ultimately leads towards modified output. This, however, will be fully developed in the following section.

1.1.1.2 Output

Several studies have proved that input alone is not enough for acquisition –as we previously mentioned, NNSs need to have opportunities to engage in interaction and, therefore, produce output as well. However, output was traditionally seen as a way of practicing what was previously learnt and nothing more, a trend which did not give enough relevance to this concept in order to be considered a crucial element for SLA. It was not until the appearance of the Output Hypothesis by Swain (1985) that output was finally contemplated as another way to acquire language as well (Gass and Selinker, 2008).

The Output Hypothesis has its origins in the analysis of Canadian Immersion Programs, which were designed to provide students with a rich source of comprehensible input in order that they became proficient users of the L2. These programs seemed to promote students' receptive skills, with students scoring as native speakers in listening and reading tests. However, when it came to productive skills, students were not able to achieve a highly proficient level –i.e. less knowledge and control of complex grammar, less precision in their overall use of vocabulary and morphosyntax, or lower accuracy on pronunciation among other things (Swain

and Lapkin, 1995; Shehadeh, 2003). According to Swain (1985 –cited in Izumi, Bigelow, Fujiwara and Fearnow, 1999), this could be explained due to the fact that students engaged in a small amount of language production and, thus, they were able to operate with their incomplete knowledge because they were rarely pushed to be more accurate. For that reason, Swain concluded that comprehensible input was not enough and that students also needed to engage in comprehensible output –"output that extends the linguistic repertoire of the learner as he/she attempts to create precisely and appropriately the meaning desired" (Swain, 1985:252 –cited in Shehadeh, 2003:156)– in order to experience communication difficulties and in order to feel pushed into making their output more precise, coherent and accurate. Swain identified three different functions of output in SLA: 1) it promoted the noticing of gaps in knowledge through internal or external feedback, bringing students' attention to something they needed to discover about the L2; 2) it allowed students to put to test their hypothesis about the language, making them aware of their existence and of their degree of correction; and 3) it served a metalinguistic function for language learners, allowing them to reflect upon their own target language use and eventually enhancing them to control and internalize linguistic knowledge (Swain and Lapkin, 1995; Warschauer, 1998; Izumi et al., 1999; Shehadeh, 2003; Gass and Selinker, 2008).

Apart from the functions of output mentioned in the Output Hypothesis, scholars have also discovered other potential functions of it that could affect SLA. Gass and Selinker (2008), for instance, believe that output triggers feedback in an implicit and explicit fashion, which becomes a very interesting source for learners to produce modified output –the negotiation that occurs in interaction serves as a catalyst for change, as the learner is shown what is incorrect and he/she is given the chance to change that output seeking for additional confirmatory evidence. Other functions of output would be that of developing automaticity and fluency among students, or that of making students move from meaning-based (semantic) to grammar-based (syntactic) processing, a more complex type of processing that is necessary to produce the language (and not just to understand it) and to achieve a high level of proficiency –it involves analyzing the previously received input or the existing internal linguistic resources in order to fill a knowledge gap (Swain and Lapkin, 1995; Warschauer, 1998; Gass and Selinker, 2008; Hall, 2011).

Some studies have tried to test the Output Hypothesis and the relevance of output for SLA in general. Swain and Lapkin (1995), for instance, tried to test one of the functions of output –that of noticing–, aiming to prove that output could lead to conscious recognition of problems and that this recognition activated the cognitive processes which lead to SLA. In order to do so, they analysed think-aloud protocols on students producing written texts and they abstracted language-related episodes –"any segment of the protocol in which a learner either spoke about a language problem he encountered while writing and solved it either correctly […] or incorrectly

[…], or simply solved it (again, either correctly or incorrectly) without having explicitly identified it as a problem" (Swain and Lapkin, 1995:378). The findings of this study showed that young adolescent L2 learners became aware of gaps in their linguistic knowledge as they produced the L2 and that, therefore, they engaged in thought processes that were crucial for SLA. Findings also revealed that learners could engage in these processes even when external feedback was not available, although the substance of students' thoughts could sometimes lead to incorrect hypotheses and generalizations. For that reason, they concluded that output alone did not work –it only worked when learners found a problem and tried to produce modified output. Izumi et al. (1999) tried to complete this research, as they thought that Swain and Lapkin's (1995) study did not address the question of whether the awareness of problems during production could prompt the learner to seek subsequent input with more focused attention. For that reason, they worked with two groups of students (a control group and an experimental group) to see whether learners provided with opportunities to receive relevant input after producing output would make use of such input to subsequently produce modified output. The conclusions of this study proved once again that output helped students notice the inadequacies of their interlanguage and it further revealed that it led to seeking relevant input in order to modify output. However, the noticing and the immediate incorporation of correct target forms was not linked to subsequent learning, which might mean that learners did not process input sufficiently given the heavy cognitive demands of the task. Another study which aimed at testing one of functions of output within the Output Hypothesis was that of Shehadeh (1997). In his research, he tried to find out how often learners tested hypotheses about the L2, to what degree this hypothesis testing led to well-formed or ill-formed output, and whether unchallenged wrong hypotheses resulted in the internalization of wrong linguistic knowledge. In order to do so, he worked with a group of ESL students carrying out a task and recorded the conversations so as to analyse hypothesis testing episodes. Results showed that students tested hypotheses quite frequently and that, most of the times, this led to well-formed output. Nevertheless, the study also showed that hypothesis testing episodes that resulted in wrong output usually went unchallenged and led to fossilization, which makes us think of the importance of providing feedback to our students –it is the only way to replace incorrect assumptions with correct ones.

Even if it seems that most studies revisiting the Output Hypothesis seem to confirm Swain's theory, there are also some authors who criticize his work. This is the case of Krashen (1998), who questioned this hypothesis from a number of perspectives. First of all, he believed that output was surprisingly rare in the language classroom but that, even when acquirers produced output, they did not often make the kind of adjustments that the Output Hypothesis considered useful in acquiring new forms –classroom discussion episodes did not usually lead to negotiation of meaning and, therefore, to interactionally modified output (see Pica, 1988; Pica

et al., 1989; Van den Branden, 1997; Lyster and Ranta, 1997; or Cummin, 1990, all cited in Krashen, 1998). Secondly, he cited a number of studies which confirmed that language learners could develop high levels of language and literacy competence without any language production –i.e. he cited Nagy et al. (1985) to show how learners could acquire great amounts of vocabulary through exposure to input, Krashen (1989) to prove that speaking skills could also be developed only through exposure to input, or Krashen (1985; 1993) to conclude that high levels of competence in general could be acquired from input alone. Regarding the issue of whether comprehensible output led to language acquisition, Krashen studied the work of several authors who seemed to confirm this connection in order to question their results. The study of Nobuyoshi and Ellis (1993), for example, concluded that pushing learners to improve accuracy by providing them with corrective feedback resulted in gains in accuracy over time. Krashen, however, believed that these conclusions were based on a very small sample size which did not allow the generalizability of results. Meanwhile, Tarone and Liu (1995) analysed the case of a single student and explained part of his L2 development with the Output Hypothesis, to which Krashen answered with some criticism: he argued that the Input Hypothesis could explain those results as much as the Output Hypothesis and that the study lacked of data on the frequency of comprehensible output –which made it hard to determine whether comprehensible output resulted in language development. Krashen also questioned the presupposed link between the comprehensible output and the interaction hypotheses, which he qualified as vague. Moreover, he disqualified the strong version of the Interaction Hypothesis (interaction is a necessary condition for language acquisition), since acquisition, as we have previously seen, is possible without participating in interaction. Finally, Krashen also discredited the Need Hypothesis (we acquire only when we need to communicate, when we need to make ourselves understood), closely connected to the Output Hypothesis, as he believed that need would not result in language acquisition if there was no comprehensible input available and that need was in fact not a necessary condition to acquire interesting and comprehensible input.

1.1.1.3 Individual learner differences

Considering how different rates of success for adults under the same conditions in SLA are, it is reasonable to say that there must be a relationship between individual learner factors and SLA –issues such as personality, motivation, learning style, aptitude or age may foster or hinder SLA development. However, what is not clear is the way in which these factors influence SLA, whether they affect the route or the rate of SLA (Ellis, 1985).

Learner factors are difficult to identify and classify, as they are not unitary constructs –they should be rather considered a complex of features. Ellis (1985) proposed to divide them into two

groups: personal factors –idiosyncratic features within the learning when approaching the L2 (i.e. group dynamics, attitudes to the teacher and the course materials or individual learning techniques)–, and general factors –characteristics that apply to all learners and which can change through the SLA process (modifiable) or not (unmodifiable). He also suggested that these factors could be affected by social aspects (concerning the relationship with NSs of the L2), cognitive aspects (concerning the problem-solving strategies they may use), and affective aspects (concerning emotional responses that arise when learning the L2).

Given the relevance of individual learner factors and the controversy around them, we are now going to revise some of the different classifications proposed so far (focusing on what Ellis considered "general factors", not "personal factors") in order to gain a better understanding on how they influence SLA and in which degree.

1.1.1.3.1 Age

According to short and long term studies that analyse the effect of age in SLA, it seems that age does not influence the route of SLA –i.e. "Learners appear to process linguistic data in the same way, irrespective of how old they are" (Ellis, 1985:105)– but it does influence the rate of learning.

Traditionally, it has been thought that children learn the L2 more easily. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), in fact, summarize research literature with the following quote: "older is faster, but younger is better" (p.155). Short-term studies analysed by them show how young learners seem to do better in pronunciation and oral skills, with Krashen et al. (1979) stating that suprasegmental phonology cannot be mastered after six and that segmental phonology cannot be mastered after eight. On the other hand, long term studies carried out by them prove that young learners do it better regarding ultimate attainment, as they are the only ones that can achieve accent-free, native-like performance on the L2. This point of view is also supported by Krashen et al. (1979), who state that "adult and older children in general acquire the second language faster than young children (older-is-better for rate of acquisition) but child second language acquirers will usually be superior in terms of ultimate attainment (younger-is-better in the long run)" (p.574). Nevertheless, it should be noted that most authors seem to distinguish between older children and younger children, as they seem to have different strengths –i.e. older children can transfer the academic skills they have acquired in their L1 to the acquisition of the L2 (Collier, 1987 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

The reason why young learners may be more likely to achieve a higher level of proficiency can be explained from very different points of view. From a social-psychological point of view, young learners do it better because they may be more willing to integrate in the L2 community –i.e. they are less aware of their cultural identity and they are not afraid to lose it, they do not have negative attitudes towards L2 speakers and they are less inhibited to socialize with them (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Brown (1980 –cited in Ellis, 1985) actually states that young children acquire the language faster because they go faster through the different stages of acculturation, namely initial excitement, culture shock, culture stress, and assimilation to the new culture. On the other hand, Neufeld (1978 –cited in Ellis, 1985) believes that young learners are more likely to move from a primary level of language –that of functional vocabulary and basic mastery of pronunciation and grammar rules– to a secondary more complex level given their motivation to learn the language more accurately in order to be accepted by their peers. This point of view, however, is easily refutable because adults can also be highly motivated to learn the language and integrate in the L2 culture, even in a more strong and conscious way than children. From a cognitive point of view, the fact that children see the L2 as a tool for expressing meaning and that they face it in a flexible way seem to enhance automatic language acquisition, which is more similar to first language acquisition and thus more effective (Ellis, 1985; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Finally, young learners' superiority can also be explained from a neurological point of view. Penfield and Roberts (1959) and Lennenberg (1967), all cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), explain this superiority based on the Theory of Lateralization, which states that prior to our puberty our brain is more plastic and allows the transfer of functions from one hemisphere to another before they become specialized –when we are young we can process language learning with both hemispheres of our brain.

As much as young learners seem to outperform in language learning, research has also disproved or at least questioned this superiority, showing that adult learners can also achieve high levels of proficiency and that they can actually do it faster than children. According to research, adult learners are at an advantage in rate of acquisition (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), especially regarding morphology, syntax and vocabulary (Stern, 1983). And regarding pronunciation, which we previously described as the weakest area for adult learners, some studies have shown that high levels of pronunciation and intonation can be achieved by adult learners as well (see Neufeld, 1978, 1979 in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). On the other hand, a number of empirical studies have not been able to prove children's superiority in language learning –i.e. early immersion studies in Canada showed that students on a "later immersion" program could easily get to the same level of those students in "early immersion", and UNESCO-sponsored international meetings showed that although young learners responded well to an early start, their superiority with respect to students that had started later

could not be proved (Stern, 1983). Burstall et al. (1974 –cited in Stern, 1983), indeed, believed that the only advantage that young learners may have is that they have been in touch with the language for longer.

What seems to be true is the fact that young learners benefit more from learning in naturalistic settings while adults benefit more from cognitive and academic approaches (Stern, 1983). This could be explained from a cognitive point of view, since adults see the language as a formal system which they can learn by studying a set of linguistics rules that they can apply when using the language (Ellis, 1985). Their learning may thus not be as automatic and natural as that of young learners, but it is more systematical and it can benefit from conscious study, especially at early stages (Krashen's differentiation between acquisition vs. learning). This could explain why some authors believe that adolescents are the best suited to learn an L2, as they can learn the language using some techniques of the young learners and some techniques of the adult learners (Ellis, 1985).

1.1.1.3.2 Aptitude

Aptitude is a concept which has long been associated to intelligence. However, can we say that aptitude is a synonym of intelligence? After revising some literature on the area, it seems that both concepts should be differentiated, as intelligence refers to a general academic or reasoning ability while aptitude refers to a series of skills which are more specific to language learning (Skehan, 1982 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Moreover, intelligence tests have been discovered to be poor predictors of SLA, as they include certain qualities that are irrelevant to language learning (Stern, 1983).

Having that in mind, we could take Stern's (1983) definition of aptitude regarding L2 learning and state that "the concept of second or foreign language aptitude can thus be used to focus on specific cognitive learner qualities needed in second language learning" (p.368), which do not affect the route but the rate of SLA. Aptitude is usually defined according to the different aptitude tests available, which propose the measurement of certain characteristics that are supposed to be crucial for SLA –i.e. the ability to discriminate the meaningful sounds of a language, to associate those sounds with written symbols, to identify grammatical regularities of a language or to memorize and recall new material (Ellis, 1985; Stern, 1983). The most famous tests available nowadays could be the MLAT (Modern Language Aptitude Test) and the EMLAT (Elementary Modern Language Aptitude Test) by Carroll and Sapon (1959, 1976), which define aptitude according to four specific abilities –namely phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, rote learning ability and inductive language learning ability–, together with the LAB

(Language Aptitude Battery) by Pimsleur (1966), which focuses on verbal intelligence, motivation and auditory ability. Many authors agree that aptitude is age-related, as it is believed to develop along the general ability for abstract thinking (Ellis, 1985).

This concept of aptitude described so far –based on the MLAT, EMLAT and LAB evaluation tools– has been criticized for a number of reasons. On the one hand, if we take into account Cummins' (1979-cited in Ellis, 1985) types of language ability –CALP, which refers to the cognitive/academic language ability, and BICS, which refers to the basic interpersonal communication skills–, we may realize that most definitions and evaluation tools only refer to CALP while ignoring BICS (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Stern, 1985). Krashen (1981 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) goes beyond and states that, according to these definitions, aptitude relates only to Krashen's concept of learning, not to his concept of acquisition –acquisition is unconscious and, therefore, aptitude has little to do in this process. On the other hand, authors like Neufeld (1978 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) believe that since everyone shares the general cognitive skills that allow language learning, then there is no such thing as "language aptitude". This, however, is not completely true because the fact that everyone can learn a language does not mean that some people can learn it better or more proficiently than the others (Stern, 1983).

1.1.1.3.3 Motivation and attitude

The concepts of motivation and attitude can explain differences in success as well. They influence the rate and level of proficiency in SLA (Gardner, 1980 and Savignon, 1976 –cited in Ellis, 1985)–, and they tend to be presented in a tandem given their interconnections –which explains why they are usually confused and overlapped.

Defining these concepts is so controversial, that even when we treat them separately, there seems to be a lot of variations in literature. Motivation, for instance, can be of different types and degrees depending on the author we quote, as there has been extensive work on the field and, therefore, there seems to be a wide variety of models explaining this factor as we will see later on in the chapter about motivation. Regarding attitude, which refers to the beliefs that the learner holds towards a number of SLA issues, its components also vary from one author to another. Nevertheless, we are here going to list the most important attitudes that seem to affect SLA (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Ellis, 1985; Stern, 1983):

- Attitude towards the L2
- Attitude towards the L2 context and community (also regarding ethnic identity)

- Attitude of the parents towards the L2 and the L2 context
- Attitude towards foreign languages and language learning
- Attitude of the peers
- Attitude towards the learning situation
- Teacher's attitude towards the learner

No matter how we define motivation and attitude, the truth is that they seem to be linked to L2 proficiency in one or another way as we will later see in the chapter about motivation. It can be that a variance in attitude and motivation results in a variance in L2 proficiency or the other way around (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Ellis, 1985), but their connection is obvious and this is something that needs to be taken into account given its pedagogical implications.

1.1.1.3.4 Personality

Many authors agree that several individual traits can influence successful SLA. However, there is a great confusion when trying to define or specify the list of traits that affect SLA, as different scholars have proposed different batteries of personality traits linked to SLA. For that reason, we here propose a summary with the most relevant and most studied traits throughout history:

1.1.1.3.4.1 Extroversion / Introversion

There is a popular belief that extroverted learners learn more rapidly and are more successfully than introverted learners, as it is easier for them to be in touch with L2 speakers –and thus receive more input– and as they tend to produce more output (Ellis, 1985). Some studies have actually supported the correlation between scores and extroversion/introversion, such as that of Chastain (1975 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), which discovered that outgoing students performed better in Spanish and German –not in French though–, that of Rossier (1976 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), which stated that extroverted Spanish-speaking students became more proficient in English oral fluency than introverted students, or that of Strong (1983 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), which found out that kindergarten students who were more sociable did better on communication skills. The question that arises is: does extroversion affect anything other than fluency? Does it actually have an effect on accuracy?

On the other hand, we can also find studies that show no strong correlation between extroversion/introversion and proficiency (see for instance Naiman et al., 1978 or Swain and Burnaby, 1976 –cited in Ellis, 1985).

1.1.1.3.4.2 Self-esteem / Sensitivity to rejection

Self-esteem is said to affect performance in the L2, as it is one of the conditions that regulates the affective filter. Nevertheless, it must be said that from the three levels of self-esteem that exist (global, specific and task-oriented), the level that affects performance the most is the last one –task-oriented self-esteem, which refers to how individuals perceive themselves while performing a given task (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Moreover, it is believed that students who fear ridicule may participate less in class, something which ends up affecting SLA in a negative way.

1.1.1.3.4.3 Risk-taking / Inhibition

Rubin (1975 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) stated that the profile of good students was always the profile of risk-takers, as risk-takers do not hesitate to use newly encountered linguistic elements or linguistic elements perceived to be complex and difficult, they are not afraid of making mistakes and they may even rehearse new elements before attempting to use them aloud (Ely, 1986 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Risk-taking is closely connected to inhibition, as they correlate in a negative way –inhibition discourages risk-taking and thus hinders a fast progress (Krashen, 1981 and Guiora et al., 1972 –cited in Ellis, 1985). Some scholars have tried to reduce learners' inhibition by providing them with small doses of alcohol or valium and they have realized that students performed better under those conditions (Guiora et al., 1972; Guiora, Action, Erard and Strickland, 1980 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

1.1.1.3.4.4 Anxiety

Anxiety is believed to affect L2 performance as it also controls the affective filter. However, performance can be affected differently depending on its type and strength. The two main kinds of anxiety according to Alpert and Haber (1960 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) are facilitating anxiety, which motivates the learner to confront the new learning task, and debilitating anxiety, which motivates the learner to avoid the new learning task. It is also interesting to consider another recurrent dichotomy in anxiety literature: state anxiety (specific of

a given situation) vs. trait anxiety (part of somebody's personality), which needs to be taken into account to see whether anxiety is going to affect only at given times or not.

1.1.1.3.4.5 Empathy

Empathy is generally defined as the willingness and capacity to understand the others (Stern, 1983). Regarding SLA, empathy is linked to the ability to put oneself in somebody else's place, showing a great permeability of language ego boundaries. Many authors like Guiora, Lane and Bosworth (1967 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991) have showed that there is a correlation between students' pronunciation and their degree of empathy.

1.1.1.3.4.6 Tolerance to ambiguity

Language learners tend to face many ambiguous situations when receiving new stimulus. For that reason, the more they are open to this ambiguity, the more they may benefit from their L2 study –the learner accepts with tolerance these situations and thus is more able to solve them (Stern, 1983). On the other hand, if students show a low tolerance to ambiguity, they may feel frustration and perform worse (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

1.1.1.3.5 Cognitive style

A cognitive style is the way in which people perceive, conceptualize, organize and recall information –that is, process information– and the way in which they approach a task. This concept was first proposed by Gardner's (1983) Theory of Multiple Intelligences, which stated that intelligence could be of nine different modalities –i.e. musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, and existential.

Cognitive styles tend to be presented as dichotomies, although it must be said that they are not distant realities, but more like a continuum (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Ellis, 1985). Following this idea that cognitive styles are usually presented as dichotomies, we are now going to analyse some of the most common cognitive styles. The first style could be that of category width, which refers to the ability to overgeneralize/limit a rule in a given context. As a result, learners could be divided into broad categorizers, who tend be great risk takers and thus make more mistakes of overgeneralization, and narrow categorizers, who do not take many risks and are likely to generate more rules than necessary to understand L2 phenomena. Secondly, we could talk about reflectivity/impulsivity, which refers to the ability to think things over or not

before making a decision. We could therefore differentiate between reflective learners, who take longer to complete a task but make fewer errors, and impulsive learners, who take less time to complete a task but make more errors. Another dichotomy is that of aural/visual, linked to the preferred method of presenting information. Finally, learners can be divided into analytical learners –who are rules formers and, although more hesitant using the language, they tend to be more accurate at the same time– and holistic learners –who are data gatherers and tend to be fluent but less accurate (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

The dichotomy that has received more attention, however, is that of field dependence/field independence, which is the ability (or lack of ability) to isolate an element from the context in which it is presented. Field dependent learners are supposed to have a personal orientation (they rely on an external frame of reference in processing information), and they tend to be holistic (they perceive a field as a whole), dependent (their self-view is derived from others), and socially sensitive (they have great skills in interpersonal, social relationships).On the other hand, field independent learners tend to have an impersonal orientation (they rely on an internal frame of reference in processing information), and are supposed to be analytic (they perceive a field in terms of its component parts), independent and not so socially aware (less skilled in interpersonal/social relationships) (Ellis, 1985). The role of such cognitive styles has been long studied and, although many researchers think that field independent students do it better when learning a language, some others believe that the empathy of field dependent students could also be linked to L2 success (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Field independence, in fact, is supposed to be more beneficial in classroom learning contexts –learners are more analytical and benefit from formal instruction– while field dependence translates into better results in untutored SLA or naturalistic SLA –students have a greater ability to receive input from frequent contact with native speakers (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Ellis, 1985).

Despite all the data that seems to link cognitive styles to L2 development, many studies carried out so far have not been able to prove this connection. This, however, could be explained given the kind of tests that have been used to measure cognitive styles (i.e. field dependence vs. field independence), which were very similar to aptitude tests and therefore very rigid. On the other hand, it must be also considered that cognitive styles may only affect certain areas of SLA and may only be influential at certain ages (Ellis, 1985).

1.1.1.3.6 Other factors

Apart from the phenomena here analysed, which are the most recurrent factors studied within the literature, we can also find some other factors that may have a greater or smaller

effect on SLA. Cook (1979 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), for instance, talks about the role of memory in SLA. Sex is also mentioned as a factor that may affect SLA, since women tend to perform better as indirectly shown in several research studies –men may dominate conversations and get more opportunities to practice, but women are given to be more effective in their intervention, as they engage more in negotiation of meaning, which is supposed to foster SLA as we have previously seen. On the other hand, prior experience in learning another foreign language can also influence language learning –languages may be similar, which facilitates language transfer, or learners may already know how to learn a language. Finally, issues like language disability should also be considered in order to explain why certain learners show more trouble to learn an L2.

1.1.1.4 Learning strategies

We talk about learning processes or learning strategies when we refer to the "internal processes which account for how the learner handles input data and how the learner utilizes L2 resources in the production of messages in the L2" (Ellis, 1985:164). According to Oxford (2001), learning strategies tend to share certain characteristics, such as control, goal-directness –goals encourage and direct actions in language learning–, autonomy –learning strategies help students become more autonomous because they have to control their own learning–, and self-efficacy –learner strategies make students believe that they can successfully complete a task.

The problem that arises when dealing with this concept is that the term "language strategy" has not been used in the same way by experts in the field and there is a great controversy regarding what the concept comprises (Stern, 1983). First of all, there seems to be a confusion over which term we should use: processes or strategies. Most of the times we see them used as synonyms –some authors use both while some others opt for one over the other for no specific reasons. However, there are other scholars like Ellis (1985) who use each term with a different meaning: he usually refers to "processes" if they involve a broader category and "strategies" to talk about the items included in each process. We believe that this differentiation is still quite arbitrary but, in order not to cause confusion we will stick to one of the terms and refer to this phenomenon as "learning strategies" in a consistent way. Another source of controversy is the type of strategies that this category includes, which varies from one author to another. For that reason, we are going to revise what several authors said on this respect and list the types of strategies they proposed.

Ellis (1985), for instance, differentiated between two broad categories within procedural knowledge (knowledge on how to learn the language more efficiently, as opposed to declarative

knowledge, which is the specific knowledge of the language): social processes, which serve to manage interaction in the L2, and cognitive processes, which refer to the mental processes to internalize and automatize L2 language and use it. Cognitive processes, in turn, were divided into some other subcategories, namely learning strategies (cognitive processes to learn the L2), production processes (cognitive processes to use the L2), and communication strategies (cognitive processes to use and communicate in the L2).

Within the first category, learning strategies, we can find several strategies which involve acquiring formulaic speech, such as pattern memorization –unconsciously learning things as a whole chuck given their recurrence or their importance to perform a communicative function–, pattern imitation –deliberate copying of whole chunks–, or pattern analysis –comparison of formulas to unpackage the information they contain–, and several strategies which are related to the development of "creative speech", such as hypothesis formation –creation of hypothesis using prior knowledge (simplification) or inducing rules from input (inferencing)–, hypothesis testing –the testing of previously created hypothesis to check whether they are right or wrong, which can be done in a receptive, productive, metalingual or interactional way–, and automatization –practicing the new L2 rules through formal (focus on form) or functional (focus on meaning) practice.

If we move to the second category, production processes, we see that the production of the L2 goes through three phases: planning program (setting a communicative goal and a discourse plan, constructing sentence plans and outlining the constituent structures of each utterance), articulation program (execution of the previous phase, dealing with syntactic, semantic, morphologic and phonologic decisions), and motor program (the actual production of the utterance).

Finally, communication strategies are defined by Ellis (1985) as the strategies used when L2 learners face a production problem and need a substitute plan to provide a short-term answer. Ellis cites Faerch and Kasper (1984) to propose a typology of communication strategies, which include reduction strategies –learners give up part of their original communicative goal, either avoiding L2 rules (formal reduction strategies) or avoiding certain speech acts, speech functions, or topics (functional reductions strategies), in order to deal with the problem–, and achievement strategies –strategies activated when the learner decides to keep the original communicative goal but tries to compensate for insufficient means using compensatory and retrieval strategies.

Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) divide learning strategies in two categories: cognitive strategies again (although they do not really identify with what Ellis [1985] calls “cognitive strategies”) and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies for these authors refer to those thought strategies which enable the learner to deal with certain information in different ways. The ways to deal with information are repetition, resourcing (using target language reference materials), directed physical response, translation, grouping (reordering material to be learned), note-taking, deduction, recombination (constructing a meaningful sentence by combining known elements in a new way), imagery, auditory representation, key word (associating a key word to familiar words in the L1 or to images in order to remember it), contextualization, elaboration (relating new information to other concepts in memory), transfer (using previously acquired knowledge to facilitate a new language learning task), inferencing, question for clarification and cooperation (working with peers to obtain feedback or to model a language activity). On the other hand, metacognitive strategies entail planning for learning –thinking about learning and how to make it efficient– and they include the use of advance organizers, of directed or selective attention, of self-management, of advance preparation (planning and rehearsing linguistic components necessary to carry out a language task), of self-monitoring, of delayed production (consciously deciding to postpone speaking to learn initially through listening comprehension), of self-evaluation and/or of self-reinforcement.

Meanwhile, Stern (1983) proposes a set of four basic strategies that, according to him, good learners use. First of all, he talks about a planning strategy, which entails the learner setting goals and subgoals, recognizing stages and developmental sequences and participating in the learning process. Secondly, he refers to an academic (explicit) learning strategy through which learners deal with language as a formal system with rules which they acquire and constantly revise until the learning process is completed. The third strategy would be that of social learning, which involves learners accepting their dependent status in early learning, trying to get as much communicative contact as possible with L2 users and using communicative strategies whenever their language ability hinders communication. Finally, Stern talks about an affective strategy, which refers to the way in which students cope with emotional and motivational problems of language learning.

Lastly, we will have a look at Oxford’s (2001) proposal, which revises six strategies which are the most relevant to her and which could be considered a mixture of all the previous models. Firstly, she talks about cognitive and metacognitive strategies again, proposing a definition which is quite similar to that of Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991). She also mentions compensatory strategies, which were previously mentioned in Ellis (1985), although this time they are specially targeted for speaking and writing. According to Little (1999) and Oxford

(1990), both cited in Oxford (2001), these strategies may not only be used to avoid communication breakdowns, but they may also promote language learning in an incidental way. Stern's (1983) affective and social strategies are also mentioned, but it must be pointed out that the definition of the latest is not exactly the same, since Oxford's social strategies entail encouraging students to learn thanks to the others –i.e. asking questions for clarification or confirmation, asking for help, learning about social or cultural norms and values, studying with other students outside the classroom and so on. Finally, she mentions mnemonic strategies, which refers to linking new things with something known in a simplistic, stimulus-response way (i.e. using sounds or body movement) and which can be seen as a subcomponent of Larsen-Freeman and Long's (1991) cognitive strategies.

Beyond the discussion of what types of strategies language learners may use, research on the learning strategies field has followed three different paths. Studies in the mid-1970s, for instance, focused on characterizing "good language learners", which were supposed to be a model for the rest of students and a source of learning strategies to be applied in L2 classrooms. Rubin (1975 –cited in Oxford 2001) is an example of a researcher who worked within this trend, coming to the conclusion that good language learners were willing and accurate guessers, had a strong drive to communicate, were uninhibited and willing to make mistakes, focused on form by looking at patterns and using analysis, took advantage of all practice opportunities, monitored their own speech and that of others and paid attention to meaning as well. This approach, however, was criticized for being too prescriptive and not being open to multiple ways of language learning. A second approach to research on the area was that of strategy instruction research, which tried to prove the positive effects of teaching learning strategies –i.e. improvement of language skills and development of strategy use, self-efficacy, anxiety reduction, increased motivation and positive attitudes (Johnson, 1999; Varela, 1999; Chamot et al. 1996, or Nunan, 1997 –cited in Oxford, 2001). Another conclusion that authors reached within this approach was that teaching strategies effectively depended on several things, such as cultural background and beliefs (O'Malley et al., 1985 –cited in Oxford, 2001) and content and presentation of the instruction. Finally, the third area of research focused on the factors that influence strategy choice. Some of them are motivation –the greater the motivation, the more frequent the use of strategies–, language learning environment –ESL environments promote a more frequent use of strategies than EFL–, learning style and personality, gender, culture or national origin, career orientation, age, and the nature of the language task (Oxford, 2001).

No matter what our point of view is within this field of research, what is important to consider is the pedagogical implications it may have. First of all, if teachers want to introduce

the instruction of learning strategies in the classroom, they may need to know about their students' preferred learning styles first and then consider the different formats for strategy instruction –i.e. more or less frequent, more or less specific and so on. Allowing learners to talk about and assess strategies openly may simplify this task and, on top of that, may allow learners to gain a better understanding of them. Then, teachers should evaluate the success of such instruction, checking the frequency of use of strategies, the appropriateness of application in a given task and the effects on language proficiency.

1.1.1.5 Situational factors

Regarding situational factors that may affect SLA, there are two main conditions that are usually considered in language learning: natural settings and classroom settings. Natural settings refer to second language (SL) contexts or those contexts "in which the learner is exposed to the language at work or in social interaction or, if the learner is a child, in a school situation where most of the other children are native speakers of the target language and where the instruction is directed towards native speakers rather than towards learners of the language" (Lightbrown and Spada, 2006:109). According to Stern (1983), natural settings could be related to Krashen's concept of "acquisition", as learners are supposed to absorb knowledge in the very different situations in which they have the opportunity to understand and use the new language and get involved in communication exchanges. On the other hand, classroom settings refer to those contexts in which "the language is taught to a group of second or foreign language learners [and] the focus is on the language itself, rather than on the messages carried by the language" (Lightbrown and Spada, 2006:109). Stern (1983) relates them to Krashen's concept of "learning", which implies that the language is learnt through a systematic study and deliberate practice guided by teaching.

Even if natural and classroom settings are presented as two extreme opposites, they should be rather understood as the two end sides of a continuum, where all kind of mixed scenarios are possible –i.e. second language learners that apart from learning just by being in touch with the target language community also take formal language lessons, or foreign language learners who, aside from their language lessons, try to be in touch with all kind of cultural products of the target language community. In fact, one setting is not necessarily better than the other because they ideally complement one another.

1.1.1.5.1 Natural settings

Natural settings have traditionally been less studied. First of all, because researchers have only paid attention to them after the 1970s. Secondly, because they are more difficult to observe and analyse. As a result, literature on this topic is not plentiful and the explanation on how natural settings affect SLA will not be as detailed as we would have liked –at least not like the one we will offer on classroom settings.

Even if studying the characteristics of natural settings seems difficult, some authors like Lightbrown and Spada (2006) proposed a list of these characteristics and compared natural and classroom settings on this basis. According to these authors, for instance, language in natural settings is not presented step by step as in classroom contexts, where lessons follow a certain syllabus. In these contexts, the learner is rather exposed to a wide variety of vocabulary and structures which follows no specific grading. The same happens with the language events that the learner is exposed to or is forced to participate in: in natural contexts, language learners observe and participate in many different types of language events which reflect the many functions that language can serve to. Another characteristic of learning in natural contexts is that the learner is surrounded by the target language for many hours a day, which provides him/her with a great quantity of input and with a lot of chances to engage in conversations with native speakers. This, in turn, fosters the availability of modified input and the production of modified output as interlocutors engage in negotiation of meaning. Nevertheless, it must be said as well that in natural settings learners' errors are rarely corrected as long as their interlocutors understand what they are saying (there is a tendency not to interrupt discourse unless there is a communication breakdown). Finally, another characteristic of natural contexts is that they push learners to their limits, as they need to use their L2 abilities from early stages. That makes learners focus on getting meaning across, and not so much on achieving accuracy.

While it seems difficult to find studies revolving around the characteristics of learning in natural settings, the contrary happens when dealing with the nature of input and interaction. As we previously saw in the section about input and interaction, a lot of attention has been devoted to the field of foreigner talk studies, which aims at analysing the simplified registers that native speakers use when addressing non-native speakers. The use of this simplified language, which was differentiated from baby talk (even if they have things in common, baby talk is specifically addressed to L1 learners), is explained by three phenomena: that of regression, which makes native speakers go back to their previous stages of L1 acquisition in order to find a suitable level for a given non-native speaker; that of matching, which explains why native speakers keep assessing the learners' language system in order to imitate the language forms they identify in

it; and that of negotiation, through which native speakers simplify and clarify what they are saying according to the feedback they receive from the learner. This simplification happens unconsciously to serve a series of functions: to promote communication, to establish affective bonds between the native and the non-native speakers or to serve as an implicit teaching mode (Ellis, 1985). Another area of research related to input and interaction in natural settings that has received a lot of attention is that of discourse studies: the analysis of joint contributions made by the native and the non-native speaker to construct discourse. This theory seems to be more comprehensive according to Ellis (1985), because it allows us to better understand how L2 learners learn.

> It is not enough to look at input and to look at frequency; the important thing is to look at the corpus as a whole and examine the interactions that take place within conversations to see how interaction itself determines frequency of forms and how it shows language functions evolving (Hatch 1978:403 –cited in Ellis, 1985:138)

The type of discourse that native and non-native speakers construct seems to vary depending on the age of the participants. Conversations involving children and adults, for example, vary depending on whether the children are the non-native or the native speakers in the conversation. In the first case, conversations tend to refer to objects that are physically present or to ongoing activity, and they tend to follow the pattern “nominating object-further development”. In the second case, there is more playing with the language. Conversations involving adults, on the other hand, tend to revolve around more demanding topics. What seems not to change regardless the age of participants is the fact that all conversations among native and non-native speakers incur in negotiation of meaning in order to avoid communication breakdowns, which in turn, as we previously saw, is extremely beneficial for SLA (Ellis, 1985).

1.1.1.5.2 Classroom settings

Literature regarding research on classroom settings is more extensive, mainly due to the fact that, as we previously said, it is more easily observable. Lightbrown and Spada (2006) provided us once more with a list of characteristics of these settings, although they differentiated two subcategories this time: non-communicative instructional settings and communicative and content-based instructional settings. According to them, non-communicative instructional settings were characterized like this:

- Linguistic items are presented in isolation, going from what is “simple” to what is “complex”.
- Errors are frequently corrected, as the focus is on accuracy.
- Learning is often limited to a few hours a week.

- The teacher is often the only native or proficient speaker students come in contact with, especially in foreign language learning.
- Students are exposed to a limited range of language discourse types –the most common is Initiation-Response-Evaluation.
- Students often feel pressure to speak or write the second language and to do so correctly from the beginning.
- Teachers' often use the learners' native language to give instructions or in classroom management events and when they use the L2, they modify it to ensure comprehension.

(Lightbrown and Spada, 2006:112)

On the other hand, in communicative and content-based instruction, designers have tried to replace some of the characteristics of structure-based instruction with those more typical of natural acquisition contexts. As a result, the characteristics of these settings are the following:

- Input is simplified and made comprehensible by the use of contextual cues, props, and gestures, rather than through structural grading.
- There is a limited amount of error correction on the part of the teacher, and meaning is emphasized over form –i.e. Request for clarification may serve as implicit feedback.
- Learners usually have only limited time for learning. For that reason, they are encouraged to work in pairs or groups, so that their opportunities for practice are greater and more varied. Language classes can also be complemented with content classes in the L2.
- Students have considerable exposure to the interlanguage of other learners, as the only native/proficient speaker is the teacher. However, and even if this input may contain lots of errors, it is still input.
- A variety of discourse types can be introduced though stories, peer-and group-work, or the use of "authentic" materials among other things.
- There is little pressure to perform at high levels of accuracy, and there is a greater emphasis on comprehension than on production, especially at early stages of learning.
- Teachers try to provide students with modified input –input in a level of language they can understand.

(Lightbrown and Spada, 2006:113-114)

However, according to Gaies (1987), we should not consider the method followed by the teacher as the key factor that differentiates the second language instruction experience. Instead, Gaies (1987) proposed that in order to fully understand each second language instructional experience, we must describe classrooms so as to identify variables of second language acquisition.

Studies in this field have been divided in two different areas: input in classroom settings and patterns of classroom interaction. Regarding input in classroom settings, studies centred on the analysis of teacher talk, as learners in classroom settings have the teacher as their main source of input. Similar to what happened with foreigner talk, teacher talk is characterized by being less complex than normal speech –i.e. formal simplifications at all language levels, interactional adjustments and so on–, as it is tuned to the learners' level of proficiency (Ellis, 1985; Gaies, 1987). However, according to Ellis (1985), language may vary depending on whether it happens in language classrooms or in content-based classroom, as in the latest case simplifications may have certain limitations –i.e. vocabulary might not be simplified because it is what it is. Another main difference with respect to foreigner talk is that teacher talk is not as finely tuned to learners, since it is normally targeted at big groups (not a single person) and feedback does not happen so often.

Regarding the second area of research, that of patterns of classroom interaction, studies have been carried out from a wide range of viewpoints. Studies on this field were initially linked to language learning methods and they were essentially prescriptive, as each method pre-established how classroom interaction should occur. However, as researchers realized of the complexity of such interaction, research shifted from prescriptive and evaluative to descriptive and awareness-raising (Tsui, 2001). Some examples of this type of research could be interaction analysis, which tried to analyse the communicative uses of teachers' and pupils' language, or discourse analysis, which focused on the joint contributions of teachers and pupils to construct discourse (Ellis, 1985). Current trends of research in this field focus on a myriad of areas of interest:

- The importance of negotiation of meaning, which provides optimal comprehensible input to the learner and facilitates L2 development; the kind of questions that teachers ask and the way they affect learners' participation –i.e. open/closed questions determine whether more than one answer is possible or not and display/referential questions determine the length and complexity of answers.
- The relevance of turn-allocation by the teacher and turn-taking by learners –i.e. high input generators are supposed to learn more than low input generators.
- The relationship between the type of tasks proposed and learners' participation –i.e. two-way tasks, in which information exchange happens in both directions, involves more negotiation of meaning than one-way tasks.
- Teachers feedback and error correction, which is seen as a way of scaffolding and, however, tends to be inconsistent and ambiguous.
- Other unobservable factors, such as learners' individual learning styles (some students benefit from active participation while some others from passive internalization), learners' psychological states (self-esteem and anxiety, for example, can hinder students' participation), cultural norms

(turn-taking, for instance, may be related to cultural norms), or teachers' factors (i.e. teachers' knowledge, beliefs, decision-making and so on).
(Gaies, 1987; Tsui, 2001).

1.1.2 Main SLA theories

After revising the key factors that play a role in second language acquisition, we would like to explore the most important theories hypothesized over history as a result of the development in the areas of linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology and sociolinguistics. These theories represent different theoretical approaches to second language acquisition and learning and have been essential in shaping the pedagogical practice carried out in the L2 classroom.

1.1.2.1 The acculturation model

This first approach to SLA could be integrated within the so-called environmentalist theories of SLA, which place great relevance to learner external variables (external environment) in the development of the language (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). The environmentalist approach influenced the way to teach foreign languages until the end of the 1960s. It was mainly based on the theories of two different schools: the Structural School of Linguistics (Bloomfield, 1933 –cited in Uso-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2006) within the field of linguistics –which believed that language consisted of a series of elements that had to be combined according to a series of rules–, and the Behaviourist School (Skinner, 1957 cited in Uso-Juan and Martínez-Flor, 2006) within the field of psychology –which saw learning as a habit formation process in which stimulus, response and reinforcement were crucial.

Taking all this into account, the Acculturation Model proposed by Schumann was established based on the idea that the degree of success in learning a foreign language depended a lot on the need of the learner to integrate and to interact in the L2 within a target language environment (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Ellis (1985) quotes Schumann himself to define this model, saying that "Second Language Acquisition is just one aspect of acculturation and the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language" (Schumman 1978:34 –cited in Ellis, 1985:251).

SLA depends thus on the degree of social and psychological distance between the learner and the target language culture, which determines the amount of contact with the target language and the openness to the available input. The more positive these factors are, the

more language learners may be able to acquire. Social distance refers to the factors which affect the learner as a member of a social group, namely social dominance (the learner's group can be in a position of dominance, non-dominance or even subordination regarding the target community), integration pattern (the learner can follow a pattern of assimilation, acculturation or preservation), enclosure in the intragroup, cohesiveness of the intragroup, size of the intragroup, cultural congruence between source and target cultures, attitudes in intergroup exchanges and intended length of residence of the learner. On the other hand, psychological distance refers to those affective factors which concern the learner as an individual, namely language shock, culture shock, motivation and ego boundaries/permeability (Ellis, 1985; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

When social and psychological distances are great, learners do not manage to go beyond early stages of development in the L2 and they end up developing a pidgin-like language that may persist along time (Pidginization Hypothesis). This pidginization has very negative effects on SLA, as it controls the level of input that the learner receives –input is rarely turned into intake– and the functions that he/she is able to handle. Regarding the three basic functions of language stated by Smith (1972), learners at a pidginization stage can only manage the communicative function (transmission of purely referential, denotative information), ignoring the integrative and expressive functions of language that allow them to mark membership to a particular group and to express themselves in a deeper way (Ellis, 1985; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

For all the reasons above stated, acculturation is crucial in SLA and determines to a great degree how well the foreign language is going to be learnt. Schumann (1986 –cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991), however, remarks that when talking about acculturation, we must differentiate between two kinds: a first type which involves that learners are socially integrated into the target language group and psychologically open to the target language group, and a second type which goes beyond and involves learners not only being socially integrated and psychologically open to the target language, but even willing to adopt the value and lifestyle of the target-language group. As much as this second condition would be preferred, Schumann believes that for SLA to happen, conditions on the first type of acculturation are more than enough.

This approach, however, did not come without limitations. On the one hand, the acculturation model only addresses naturalistic SLA and thus it cannot be applied in contexts where the target language is learnt as a foreign language (and not as a second language). On the other hand, this model could be considered incomplete because it only explains how

language learners can achieve a native-like level and not how internal factors operate –how input becomes intake and how this is integrated in our existing inner categories (Ellis, 1985).

1.1.2.2 The accommodation theory

The accommodation theory, proposed by Giles, shares certain premises with the Acculturation Model, as both models work on the relationship between the learner's social group (or "ingroup") and the target language group (or "outgroup"). However, Giles explains the relationship between these two groups in terms of perceived social distance –it is not the actual relationship they have the one that matters, but rather the way in which the ingroup defines itself in relationship to the outgroup (Ellis, 1985).

These intergroup relationships are subject to changes and they can fluctuate depending on how the relationship between groups develops. Giles mentions some key variables that mark this relationship and analyses how individual learner's motivation and proficiency level may shape SLA according to these variables. First of all, he talks about identification with the ingroup, which translates into a more or less visible separation from the outgroup. If students show a high level of motivation and/or a high level of proficiency, there tends to be a weaker identification with the ingroup and a greater proximity to the outgroup, whereas among non-motivated, low proficient students there is a strong identification with the ingroup. Secondly, Giles mentions inter-ethnic comparisons and comes to the conclusion that highly motivated and high proficient students make either favourable or no comparison between the ingroup and the outgroup, whereas students showing a low motivation and a low level of proficiency are given to make negative comparison –i.e. the ingroup may be seen as inferior. Giles also talks about the perception of ethno-linguistic vitality, which refers to the status of the ingroup according to the learner, and concludes that there is a low perception among highly motivated and high proficient students and a high perception among learners with low motivation and/or with a low level of proficiency. The fourth category would refer to the perception of the ingroup boundaries, seen as soft and open for highly motivated and highly proficient students and seen as hard and closed for non-motivated and low proficient students. Finally, the last variable cited by Giles is that of identification with other social categories, which is strong among learners with a high motivation and level of proficiency, and which is weak for learners with a low motivation and level of proficiency.

According to Giles et al. (1977 –cited in Ellis, 1985), these relationships do not only explain how learners process input, but also how learners produce output reducing or accentuating linguistic social differences. These authors state that L2 learners use what they call "ethnic

speech markers" (linguistic features to mark the ingroup membership of the speaker) in a greater or lower degree to foster upward convergence –convergence towards the outgroup–, which is associated to learning progress, or downward convergence –separation from the outgroup–, which is associated to fossilization.

This theory also gave rise to certain criticism, as once again it only explained in which contexts language acquisition happened, but it did not explain how internal factors operate. Moreover, this theory was questioned because it provided an explanation of language-learner language variability only based on ethnic identity, which cannot solely explain the phenomenon of variability.

1.1.2.3 The universal hypothesis

The universal hypothesis belongs to the innatist or nativist approaches to SLA, which assume that there is some kind of innate predisposition to language learning among humans, who are supposed to have an independent linguistic faculty that is responsible for acquisition (Ellis, 1985). This approach originated in the late 1960s and tried to break with Skinner's Behaviourism, as the latest could not explain why children can produce more language than they are exposed to (Hall, 2011).

The universal hypothesis mainly nurtures itself from the works of two authors: Greenberg (1966) and the Typological Universals and Chomsky (1965, 1980, 1981) and his Universal Grammar. However, although both theories provide some intake to this hypothesis, it must be said that Chomsky's Universal Grammar is the most popular contribution to this approach.

Chomsky's theory is based on the idea that human beings are predisposed to learn a language because they are endowed with a Universal Grammar (UG), which is a "a set of (such) innate, abstract, linguistics principles which govern what is possible in human languages" (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991:231). The role of this Universal Grammar is crucial, as input alone is not enough to make sense of language rules: we are not always exposed to all structures in a language, grammar rules tend to be abstract and not easily recognizable, and we do not usually receive negative feedback in order to discard wrong hypotheses (Ellis, 1985). For that reason, the Universal Grammar comes to solve these problems by providing us with certain universal principles which help us constrain the options from which we must choose, allowing us to build a core grammar –principles and parameters that are found in all natural languages– and to complement it with peripheral rules –language-specific rules. This, in exchange, connects with Chomsky's theory of markedness, which states

that all language rules exist on a continuum where marked rules –language-specific rules– and unmarked rules –in accord with the general tendencies of language– represent the opposite extremes (Ellis, 1985).

On the other hand, Greenberg (1966 –cited in Ellis, 1985) proposed the existence of typological universals, whose existence cannot only be explained by innatism among humans, but also through languages' common genetic origin and common communicative uses. He suggested that there were three types of universals (substantive, formal and implicational) and that they could be absolute or just tendencies, depending on the degree of probability of appearing in languages.

No matter if we talk about Universal Grammar or Typological Universals, the truth is that for these authors there seem to exist some kind of linguistic universals which humans can make use of not only to learn their mother tongue, but also to learn an L2. These linguistic universals may thus influence the formation of the L2 grammar, placing constraints on students' interlanguage and dictating the order in which rules and patterns are to be learnt (first unmarked rules, which may be transferred from the L1, and then marked ones).

This approach was largely praised, as it provided a very interesting point of view to second language acquisition. However, it also raised some criticism, mainly linked to the concept of markedness, which was difficult to define and which could not explain the complexity of SLA, and to the fact that it ignored variability –it assumed that the development of linguistic knowledge was supposed to be homogeneous among all learners (Ellis, 1985).

1.1.2.4 The monitor theory

The monitor theory, proposed by Krashen (1982, 1985), is also part of the innatist/nativist approaches to SLA and began as a model of second language performance (the Monitor Model), in which SL performance relied on two different knowledge systems: 1) acquired system –subconscious knowledge of the L2 grammar that we use in real-time communication when paying attention to meaning; and 2) learned system –rules learnt in formal instruction that we use to plan, inspect or monitor the output of the acquired language when we focus on form (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991).

This initial model eventually turned into a theory, which was the first theory specifically developed for SLA and thus the most comprehensive one. This theory mainly consisted on five

central hypotheses, which we here summarize (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991; Ellis, 1985; Hall, 2011):

1. The acquisition learning hypothesis: As we previously saw, Krashen believed that there were two types of knowledge: acquisition (subconscious knowledge that he referred to as "acquired system" before) and learning (the result of conscious study that he referred to as "learned system" before). According to him, these two kinds of knowledge were stored separately and thus they were also used differently, with acquired knowledge helping initiate the comprehension and production of utterances and the learnt knowledge only available when the "monitor process" was in use.
2. The natural order hypothesis: Rules are acquired in a predictable order which, contrary to what it may be thought, is not influenced by linguistic complexity or classroom learning sequence.
3. The monitor hypothesis: The "monitor" is a device to edit language performance (we use "learnt" knowledge to modify "acquired" knowledge). This editing can happen before or after uttering something but its functionality is quite limited, as for the "monitor" to be used certain conditions must apply: 1) there is enough time; 2) the focus is on form; 3) the user knows the rule.
4. The input hypothesis: Acquisition occurs when L2 learners receive comprehensible input or i+1 (i= language competence already acquired; and 1=language input just above this level) – i.e. input that is just a little beyond the students' current level of competence. In order to understand how learners process this i+1, a great innate predisposition among them must be assumed even after taking into account the different mechanisms to cope with the unknown structures that learners have at their disposal (i.e. linguistic and extra-linguistic context, knowledge of the world, or previously acquired linguistic knowledge).
5. The affective-filter hypothesis: This hypothesis is based on the notion of "affective filter" proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977), which refers to a filter that controls the amount of input received and converted into intake. According to Krashen, filters can determine whether input is acquired or not based on the strength of the following factors: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. As a result, he distinguishes two different types of affective filters: 1) low filter, which corresponds to a high level of motivation and self-confidence and a low level of anxiety, and which facilitates the processing of comprehensible input; and 2) high filter, which corresponds to a low level of motivation, little self-confidence and high anxiety, and which hinders the processing of comprehensible input.

Beside these hypotheses, Krashen proposed a series of causative variables that one should also take into account in the Monitor Theory. These variables were aptitude (how well the learning will be in form-focused language), the role of the first language (the learner may use the L1 to copy the rules he/she does not know in the L2), routines and patterns, individual differences and age.

Krashen's theory was very used to support immersion projects and language-through-content courses, and it also had many implications for the EFL classroom: teachers should provide students with as much comprehensible input as possible, there should be a focus on meaning rather than on form, and teachers should try to create a positive affective classroom climate in order to "low the filter" among other things.

However, this theory received a lot of criticism as well. The "acquisition-learning" distinction, for instance, has been considered quite controversial, as it contradicts the belief of many scholars that learnt and acquired knowledge is closely connected (learnt knowledge can become acquired knowledge after automatizing it through practice). Moreover, these concepts are defined in terms of "subconscious" and "conscious" processes, which cannot be empirically tested (McLauglin, 1978 –cited in Ellis, 1985). The monitor process, on the other hand, also raised criticism, as it was presented as an individual process (and not the result of collaborative activity as well) that was difficult to identify (learners may not know if they edit what they say because they know the rule of because it just sounds better that way) and that was only limited to syntax (and learners can also edit other things, such as pronunciation or discourse). Finally, the monitor theory explains variability based on the two types of knowledge when it could present it as part of a continuum to explain a wider range of situations (Ellis, 1985).

1.1.2.5 The functional perspective

Functional approaches to SLA are concerned with the ways in which L2 learners make meaning and achieve personal communicative goals, and they are based on the acceptance that language development arises out of communicative need.

One of the main approaches that support this perspective from the point of view of linguistics is that of Systemic Functional Linguistics, proposed by Halliday (1970, 1973, 1974, 1975). Systemic Functional Linguistics try to explain how the function of language determines the form of language: students learn to use the language in order to fulfil a number of functions given a particular cultural and social context (Herriman, 2013; Uso-Juan and Martínez-Flor,

2006). These functions can be of one of the following types: 1) instrumental –language to obtain things; 2) regulatory –language to regulate people's behaviour; 3) interactional –language to interact with other people; 4) personal –language to express one's feelings; 5) heuristic –language to explore the outside world; 6) imaginative –language to create an environment; 7) representational – language to communicate information.

Taking this into account, the functional view to SLA is established on the belief that language learning evolves out of learning how to engage in a conversation and learning the syntactic constructions that are necessary to carry out those conversations (Mehrgan, 2012). Moreover, functional approaches to SLA share these characteristics: 1) they focus not only on the use of language in real situations but also on underlying knowledge (no distinction between competence and performance); 2) the study of SLA begins with the assumption that the purpose of language is communication and that the development of linguistic knowledge requires communicative use; and 3) the scope of concern goes beyond the sentence to include discourse structure (Mehrgan, 2012).

An example of this perspective is the functional-typological theory proposed by Givon (cited in Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). This theory tries to account for all kinds of language change, including language acquisition, and it is functionalist in its view that syntax comes from properties of human discourse. He thus mentions the notion of syntactic change, which in language acquisition could be the development of interlanguage from a pre-grammatical to a grammatical mode, and he suggests that it is driven primarily by psycholinguistic and pragmatic principles relating to speech perception and production in face-to-face interaction.

Another example would be the discourse theory proposed by Hatch (cited in Ellis, 1985). This theory also relies on language use and communication, as it tries to explain how SLA takes place through the interaction of L2 learners with other people, and it is based on a series of principles: 1) SLA follows a natural route in syntactical development, 2) native speakers adjust their speech in order to negotiate meaning with non-native speakers; 3) these conversational strategies in negotiating meaning and the resulting input influence the rate and the route of SLA; and 4) the natural route is the result of learning how to hold conversations. Taking these principles into account, the route of development of SLA goes through the development of an interlanguage.

Some common problems associated to these theories are the fact that the relationship between interaction and SLA has not been empirically proved –and it would need to accommodate the fact that successful SLA can also take place even if there is no negotiation

involved–, and the fact that they only explain the external processes that affect SLA but not the internal processes –i.e. learner strategies (Ellis, 1985).

1.2 Motivation

1.2.1 Defining motivation

There has been a lot of controversy trying to define the concept of motivation, trying to delimit what it comprises and trying to explain how it works –i.e. how it can be promoted or what outcomes it has on the language learning field. However, what seems to be clear is that it is a relevant factor in SLA that needs to be taken into account, as we have previously seen. In fact, we have decided to devote a complete section to it, even if it was previously mentioned as part of the individual learner differences that affect SLA, since we consider that its effects are greater than those of the other factors.

Motivation has been defined in many different ways by many different authors. Ryan and Deci (2000), for instance, believe that "to be motivated means to be moved to do something" (p.54), a feeling which practitioners try to foster among their students. Noels (2001), on the other hand, cites Gardner's (1985) definition of motivation, according to whom motivation is a "complex of constructs, involving the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language" (p.43).

It is interesting to take into account Gardner's definition, since motivation is indeed a complex construct and not a unitary phenomenon as some put it. In fact, when trying to define motivation we have to assume that motivation varies in very different ways. Most literature in the field has focused on distinguishing the different orientations/types of motivation, trying to define categories and to evaluate their effectiveness regarding SLA. In that respect, we should point out that two different dichotomies have led research on the area: integrative vs. instrumental motivation and intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation.

The first dichotomy (integrative vs. instrumental motivation) is at the core of Gardner and Lambert's (1972) Socio-educational Model, a model that was very influential in its time and that went unchallenged over the years. According to this model, motivation can be of either one of these types: integrative, which refers to a desire to communicate with members of the L2 community and eventually become similar to them, assuming a positive attitude towards the L2 community; and instrumental, which refers to a desire to learn the L2 to achieve some practical goal, assuming potential utilitarian gains linked to L2 proficiency (Clement, Dörnyei and Noels,

1994; Noels et al., 2000; Noels, 2001; Matsuzaki Carreira, 2005). It is hard to say which one is a better predictor of language achievement (Noels, 2001). Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972 –cited in Noels et al., 2000) originally believed that the integrative orientation was the most beneficial type of motivation for SLA, since learners with an integrative motivation were supposed to make a greater motivational effort in learning the L2 and thus achieve a greater L2 competence. However, research based on this model showed that, in some occasions, students with an instrumental orientation did better than students with an integrative orientation. Noels (2001) came to the conclusion that these two orientations were not mutually exclusive and that both could promote motivation and thus language achievement. Clément and Kruidenier (1983 –cited in Clement et al., 1994), on the other hand, believed that the influence of these orientations depended very much on the context –i.e. in foreign language contexts, instrumental orientation acquires a special importance at intermediate levels– and that other kinds of orientations could also have an important role in L2 learning –i.e. Instrumental, friendship, travel, knowledge and sociocultural orientations (Dörnyei, 1994a; Clement, Dörnyei and Noels, 1994; Noels et al., 2000; Matsuzaki Carreira, 2005).

The second most popular dichotomy is that of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which is at the core of the Self-determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985). Intrinsic motivation, as these authors define it, refers to “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable”, whereas extrinsic motivation refers to “doing something because it leads to a separate outcome”, as a means to an end (Ryan and Deci, 2000:55). These orientations are seen as part of a continuum, going from amotivation (where students do not value the activity and do not expect it to lead them to a desired outcome) to intrinsic motivation passing through extrinsic motivation, which varies according to the degree of self-determination –from dependency and externalization of rules to a greater autonomy and internalization of rules.

Extrinsic motivation is divided in a series of subcategories, which represent different degrees of self-determination within this broader category: 1) external regulation, which is the least autonomous type of extrinsic motivation, since behaviours depend on an external demand or reward; 2) introjected regulation, where there is an internal regulation that works under an external feeling of pressure; 3) identification, where the subject identifies the personal importance of a behaviour and accepts its regulation as his/her own; and 4) integrated regulation, which is the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation, since regulations have been fully assimilated and integrated as one’s own.

Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, can also be classified in three different categories, although these categories are not graded within the continuum (they all represent the greatest

degree of internalization and autonomy). These subcategories are intrinsic-knowledge, which refers to the "feelings of pleasure that come from developing knowledge and satisfying one's curiosity about a topic area"; intrinsic-accomplishment, which refers to the "enjoyable sensations that are associated with surpassing oneself and mastering a difficult task"; and intrinsic-stimulation, which refers to the "simple enjoyment of the aesthetics of the experience" (Noels, 2001:45). One last consideration that needs to be assumed is that this continuum is not a developmental continuum as it could be expected to be –we are not meant to move forward, as we can actually go back and forth depending on prior experiences and situational factors. Nevertheless, Ryan and Deci (2000) state that "it appears that people's general regulatory style does, on average, tend to become more 'internal' over time […] in accord with the general organismic tendencies toward autonomy and self-regulation" (p.63). However, according to these authors, there are some social and environmental factors that facilitate intrinsic motivation, namely relatedness (sense of belongingness and connectedness to the people, group or culture which imposes the goal), competence (understanding the goal and having the skills to succeed at it) and autonomy (feeling that one's behaviour emanates from the self).

This theory, however, also received criticism, mainly because it assumed that intrinsic motivation was the most desired type of motivation –intrinsic motivation was considered the main motivator of the educational process and extrinsic motivation actually was thought to undermine it, as students were supposed to lose their genuine interest in an activity when they did it as a requirement. Recent research has disproved this, as it has been shown that, under certain circumstances, extrinsic rewards can be combined with or can lead to intrinsic motivation (as long as they are self-determined and internalised enough).

These two dyads have been so influential in the field of motivation that some authors have even tried to relate to them in order to propose a model that would include them both, resorting to their polysemy in order to make them more flexible concepts. Some authors, such as Soh (1987 –cited in Noels, 2001), believed that they were synonyms.

> Like the integrative orientation, intrinsic motivation is defined by reasons that are more directed to the language and its culture for their own value. […] On the other hand, like the instrumental orientation, extrinsic motivation refers to reasons for learning a language which are extraneous to that activity (p.51).

Meanwhile, Schmitdt et al. (1996 –cited in Matsuzaki Carreira, 2005) stated that the integrative-instrumental dyad could be integrated within the intrinsic-extrinsic dyad. These authors defined intrinsic motivation as the motivation to get sufficient rewards from the activity itself and extrinsic motivation as the motivation to obtain an external reward, which made them

assume that instrumental and integrative were subcategories within the broader category of extrinsic motivation, as both were related to goals and outcomes. Brown (2000 – cited in Matsuzaki Carreira, 2005), on the other hand, created four conglomerate concepts based on these two dyads which attempted to explain motivation, namely intrinsic-integrative motivation (will to integrate into the L2 culture), intrinsic-instrumental motivation (will to reach goals using the L2), extrinsic-integrative motivation (pressure to learn the language for integrative reasons –i.e. Japanese parents sending kids to a Japanese school in the US) and extrinsic-instrumental (pressure to learn the language for instrumental reasons –i.e. company sending employees to learn English so that they can work better). Brown's model even inspired Matsuzaki's (2005) model, who explained motivation using the following categories:

- Goal-autonomy-integrative (perfect intrinsic and integrative motivation);
- Goal-autonomy-instrumental (perfect intrinsic and instrumental motivation);
- Means-autonomy-integrative (highly self-determined extrinsic and integrative motivation);
- Means-autonomy-instrumental (highly self-determined extrinsic and instrumental motivation);
- Goal-heteronomy-integrative (somewhat self-determined extrinsic and integrative motivation);
- Goal-heteronomy-instrumental (somewhat self-determined extrinsic and instrumental motivation);
- Means-heteronomy-integrative (perfect extrinsic and integrative motivation);
- Means-heteronomy-instrumental (perfect extrinsic and instrumental motivation).

Nowadays, however, these two models have been relegated to a secondary position, as a great myriad of alternative models which get passed the integrative-instrumental/intrinsic-extrinsic dyads have been proposed lately. Clément and Kruidenier's (1983 –cited in Clément, Dörnyei and Noels, 1994) model, for example, differentiated five different types of orientations (instrumental, knowledge, friendship, travel and sociocultural). On the other hand, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) extended Clément and Kruidenier's model and proposed some other five types of motivation, namely instrumental knowledge orientation, xenophobic orientation (which was similar to the "friendship" orientation), identification orientation, sociocultural orientation and English media orientation. Gardner (2007), on the other hand, moved beyond his previous model to state that motivation could be of two broader kinds: language learning motivation, which refers to the motivation to learn a second language taking every opportunity that is available (closely linked to his concept of integrativeness), and classroom learning motivation, which refers to the motivation in the classroom situation or in any specific situation

(which depends on the educational system and the experiences associated with the educational environment).

However, in order to create a general framework to explain L2 motivation, distinguishing motivation types/orientations is not enough. Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1994), for example, believed that it was important to see the effect of attitudes, self-confidence and group dynamics (evaluation of the learning environment) on motivation. Noels (2001), on the other hand, proposed a multilevel L2 motivation construct because she thought that it was important to consider social contact, fundamental needs, intention, L2 use and linguistic/non-linguistic outcomes. Finally, Gardner (2007) stated that some of the factors that needed to be considered in order to come up with a motivation framework were the stages of language acquisition and the cultural & educational contexts.

From all the comprehensive models that we have revised, we have decided to base our research on Dörnyei's (1994a) model, which takes into account the three basic constituents of the L2 learning process: the L2, the L2 learner and the L2 situation. The language level refers to the orientations and motives related to various aspects of the L2 –i.e. the culture it conveys, the L2 community, the potential usefulness of a proficiency in it and so on. This level is composed by two subsystems, which are based on Gardner's Sociocultural Model: the integrative motivational subsystem –affective predisposition towards the L2 and a general interest in foreignness and foreign languages– and the instrumental motivational subsystem. The learner level, on the other hand, refers to the affects and cognitions which form stable personality traits developed in the past. In this level we can differentiate two motivational processes: need for achievement and self-confidence (based on language use anxiety, perceived L2 competence, causal attributions and self-efficacy). Finally, the learning situation level refers to the situation-specific motives that affect language learning in a classroom setting. In this case, there are three motivational sources: course-specific motivational components (i.e. syllabus, teaching materials or the teaching method among other things), teacher-specific motivational components (i.e. teacher's personality, teaching style and feedback or relationship with students among other things) and group-specific motivational components (i.e. dynamics of the learning group). Within the first motivational source, course-specific motivational components, we can differentiate four major motivational factors: 1) interest –inherent curiosity and desire to know more about oneself and one's own environment; 2) relevance –extent to which students feel that instruction is connected to personal needs, values and goals; 3) expectancy –likelihood of success, which depends on task difficulty, amount of effort required, or amount of available assistance and guidance among other things; and 4) satisfaction –outcomes of an activity, combining extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. If we

take the second motivational source, teacher-specific motivational components, we will be able to find three major motivational factors: 1) affiliative drive –need to please the teacher, which starts as an extrinsic interest but that can turn into an intrinsic interest; 2) teacher's authority type –autonomy supportive vs. controlling; and 3) teacher's role in the development of the students' motivation, which is canalized in different channels (modelling of attitudes and orientations, task presentation and feedback). Finally, within the third motivational source, group-specific motivational components, we can distinguish four motivational factors: 1) goal-orientedness, which refers to the extent to which a group is attuned to pursuing its goal (in this case, language learning); 2) norm and reward system, which refers to the extrinsic motives that define which behaviours allow/hinder efficient learning; 3) group cohesion, which refers to the strength of the relationship that links the members of the group; and 4) classroom goal structures, which can be of three types (competitive, cooperative or individualistic).

1.2.2 How to foster motivation among students

Since we decided to focus our research on Dörnyei's (1994a) model, we should also consider the list of strategies that he proposed in order to motivate L2 students. These strategies, as it could be expected, are related to the three levels of motivation that the author proposed in his framework, namely language level, learner level, and learning situation level. Below, you can see the entire list of strategies compiled in his paper –a list that will be later observed in the design of the pilot study, as it is the theoretical basis that inspired our motivation questionnaires.

- Strategies related to "Language Level":
    - Include a sociocultural component in the L2 syllabus (i.e. watching films or TV recordings, playing music in the L2, inviting interesting native speaking guests…).
    - Develop learners' cross-cultural awareness system, showing not only differences but similarities (making the L2 more familiar to students).
    - Promote student contact with L2 speakers (i.e. organizing meetings with L2 speakers, organising school trips, exchanges…).
    - Develop learners' instrumental motivation by making students aware of the importance of the L2 in the world and in their lives.
- Strategies related to the "Learner Level":
    - Develop students' self-confidence by showing them that you trust them to achieve their goals (i.e. Use praise, reinforcement, and encouragement; try to remove uncertainties and counteract experiences of frustration).

- Promote the students' self-efficacy with regard to achieving their goals by teaching students learning and communicative strategies and strategies for information processing and problem-solving. Help students develop realistic expectations and tell them about their difficulties in language learning.
- Promote favourable self-perceptions of competence in the L2 (i.e. making them realise that mistakes are part of learning, that communication is more important than speaking correctly, showing them your own difficulties…).
- Decrease student anxiety by creating a supportive learning environment.
- Promote motivation-enhancing attributions by helping students link effort and outcome and by explaining past failures to controllable factors (i.e. insufficient effort, confusion about what to do…).
- Encourage students to set attainable subgoals (i.e. learning a number of words every day).

- Strategies related to the "Learning Situation Level":

- Course-specific motivational components:
  - Make the syllabus of the course relevant by trying to meet with it students' needs (Carry out needs analysis and involve students in the planning).
  - Increase attractiveness of the course content by using authentic materials, unusual and exotic supplementary materials, recordings, visual aids…
  - Discuss with the students the choice of teaching materials for the course.
  - Arouse and sustain curiosity and attention by introducing unexpected, novel, unfamiliar events (i.e. changing people's seats, changing the order of events in the classroom).
  - Increase students' interest and involvement in the task by designing and selecting varied and challenging activities, adapting tasks to students' interests, including new elements every time, proposing game-like tasks, leaving activities open-ended, personalising tasks so that students engage in meaningful interactions…
  - Match difficulty of tasks with students' abilities.
  - Increase student expectancy of task fulfilment by helping them on their performance (i.e. familiarising them with the task, guiding them about procedures and strategies involved…).
  - Facilitate student satisfaction by allowing students to create finished products that they can perform or display, letting them know their achievements and celebrating success.
- Teacher-specific motivational components:
  - Try to be empathic (being sensitive to students' needs, feelings and perspectives), congruent (to be real and authentic and to avoid hiding behind a give role) and

accepting (to take into account that the student is a human being with virtues and faults).

- Adopt the role of a facilitator rather than the authority figure.
- Promote learner autonomy (i.e. allowing alternative ways of goal attainment, minimising external pressure, giving students a say on their learning process…).
- Model student interest in the L2 by showing them enthusiasm about the L2 and L2 teaching.
- Introduce tasks to stimulate intrinsic motivation and to help internalize extrinsic motivation (i.e. Tasks presented as great learning opportunities, tasks connected to things that students find interesting already…).
- Use motivating feedback by using informational rather than controlling feedback, valuing achievements and not making a big deal about errors.

o Group-specific motivational components:

- Increase group's goal-orientedness by making students discuss about the group goal(s) and by allowing them to evaluate whether they are achieving it or not.
- Promote the internalisation of classroom norms by establishing them from the beginning and explaining their importance. Students should also have a say on such norms.
- Help maintain internalised classroom norms.
- Minimise the detrimental effect of evaluation on intrinsic motivation (i.e. focus on individual improvements, avoid comparisons, make evaluation private, do not encourage competition…).
- Promote the development of group cohesion and enhance inter-member relations by creating situations where students can get to know each other and share personal information.
- Use cooperative learning techniques by making students work in groups where the group's achievement is evaluated.

  (Adapted from Dörnyei, 1994a)

This list, as we can see, is very comprehensive but very long at the same time. For that reason, Dörnyei (1996a –cited in Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998) proposed a shorter list with the most representative strategies for language learning –"the ten commandments for motivating language learners"– which were later tested by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998). This list was created by grouping strategies according to the apparent domain they belonged to and by ranking them according to the importance teachers gave them. The result was as it follows:

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour –if the teacher is motivated, this fosters students' motivation.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom –student anxiety created by a tense classroom is one of the most potent factors undermining L2 motivation.
3. Present the tasks properly –if teachers present tasks well, this can raise students' interest and increase their expectancy to fulfil the task.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners –students make more efforts when they try to please the teacher.
5. Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence –it is not that important what a learner knows/can do, but what a learner thinks that he/she knows/is able to do.
6. Make the language classes interesting –learners are more motivated when their subjective experience of the L2 lesson is good.
7. Promote learner autonomy –L2 motivation and autonomy go hand in hand.
8. Personalize the learning process –the L2 course should be personally relevant to the students (i.e. tasks should match students' needs, students should exchange personal relevant information so that they find tasks intrinsically interesting and so on).
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness –it is important to take into account students' goals (orientations), goals that go beyond the dyad integrative-instrumental.
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture –even if it's not mandatory that students are interested in the L2 culture in order to develop motivation to learn the L2, it seems that the predisposition towards the L2 community helps quite a lot.

(Adapted from Dörnyei and Csizér, 1998)

Although we have not been able to find other authors that propose such a comprehensive response to "how to motivate students", we have found a myriad of studies which show how to promote motivation from a particular point of view which, in most cases, can be categorized within Dörnyei's (1994a) list of strategies.

Regarding the language level proposed by Dörnyei (1994a), we have found several authors who explained the benefits of using certain materials and methods given their potential to promote contact with the L2 culture and community. That is the case of Peacock (1998), who studied the effect of authentic materials on the motivation of EFL learners and who came to the conclusion that one of the ways to explain their positive correlation was the fact that authentic materials brought learners closer to the target culture, making learning more enjoyable. Alm (2006), on the other hand, tried to explain the role of CALL (Computer-assisted language

learning) in L2 motivation and used Deci and Ryan's (1985) concepts of competence, relatedness and autonomy. According to this author, in order that students were motivated they should relate to the L2 community, something which was a little bit complicated in the language classroom but which could be achieved thanks to the ICTs –i.e. by using computer-mediated-communication (CMC), blogs, social networks, wikis and so on. In the same line, Warschauer (1996b) studied the motivational aspects of using computers for writing and communication and concluded that one of the main motivating aspects of using computers was the fact they could be used to communicate with native speakers and other non-native speaker learners, making students feel part of a community and learn about different people and cultures. Tsukamoto, Nusplieger and Senzaki (2009) also claimed that synchronous CMC motivated learners considering that it gave students the opportunity to learn more about life in other countries. Finally, Skinner and Austin (1999), who tried to focus on how computer conferencing motivated students, linked these two elements given the importance of providing students with "real" communication with a "real" community, which allowed students to feel part of such community.

Analysed studies could also be categorized within Dörnyei's learner level, which mainly deals with promoting self-confidence and favorable self-perceptions on the learner. Warschauer (1996b), for instance, also explained the beneficial effect of computers on L2 motivation appealing to their capacity to promote students' empowerment –i.e. they enhance personal power, they allow overcoming isolation and they make it less threatening to contact people. Alm (2006), as we previously saw, supported the role of CALL on motivation basing it on the concept of competence –in other words, she believed that CALL fostered motivation because it allowed learners to feel effective in their ongoing interactions. Skinner and Austin (1999), on the other hand, explained the effect of computer conferencing on motivation resorting to their power to enhance personal confidence, as the use of computers for communication seemed to make students less stressed and more confident than in face-to-face communication. Finally, Wu, Yen and Marek (2011), who proposed the use of online EFL interaction to increase motivation, also linked the usefulness of synchronous and asynchronous CMC to their capacity to promote self-confidence among students, which, in turn, was interrelated with motivation and ability.

Finally, we also revised some studies which explained how to promote motivation paying attention to the learning situation level. These studies explained how the course (i.e. materials, syllabus…), the teacher or the group could enhance motivation. First of all, we analysed Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) work, which focused on the instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation. The aim of the study was to test the

efficiency of such interventions by correlating teachers' motivational teaching practice and students' language motivation, a relationship which turned out to be proved –the variation in the students' motivated behaviour was caused by the quality of the teachers' motivated behaviour. Then, we revised a series of studies (some of which have been already mentioned) which showed how the selection of materials and method affected students' motivation. Such studies, thus, aimed at emphasizing the effect of authentic materials (Peacock, 1997; Widdowson, 1998), of technological resources (Genc Ilter, 2009), of the web 1.0 and the web 2.0 (Alm, 2006), of adaptative computer-assisted instruction (Song and Keller, 2001) or of CMC (Wu et al., 2011; Tsukamoto et al., 2009; Skinner and Austin, 1999) on L2 motivation. Their motivational effect could be explained by some of the factors previously observed –i.e. these methods and materials enhanced proximity to the L2 culture & community or learners' empowerment– or by some other factors –i.e. novelty, enjoyment or proximity to students' everyday interests and needs among other things.

1.2.3 Effect of motivation in the learning process

There is a general tendency to believe that L2 motivation directly influences L2 proficiency, a belief that is used to validate the importance of motivation in the language learning process given its "pedagogical implications". However, is this belief entirely true? And, in case it is, how does motivation relate to L2 proficiency? In order to answer these questions, we are now going to revise several studies that tried to explain the effects of L2 motivation and its connection to L2 development.

First of all, we will revise Kormos and Dörnyei's (2004) work, which examines how motivational factors affect the quality and quantity of student performance in a L2 communicative task. According to these authors, there were seven motivational factors that could affect students' L2 task performance, namely integrativeness –a broad positive disposition towards the L2 community and culture–, incentive values of English proficiency or instrumentality, attitudes towards the English course, linguistic self-confidence, language use anxiety, task attitudes and willingness to communicate (WTC). On the other hand, these authors proposed a list of linguistic variables that should be observed in order to account for L2 improvement (quantity and quality of L2): number of words, number of turns, accuracy, complexity, lexical richness, number of arguments, and number of counterarguments. The aim of the study was thus to analyse an oral argumentative task carried out by a group of English students in order to correlate the motivational and language variables observed. Results initially showed that motivation had an effect on the quantity rather than on the quality of language. However, when they introduced some other elements in the analysis –i.e. attitude

towards the task and influence of the interlocutor–, they also realized that such elements should be considered relevant filters. In fact, students with a positive attitude towards the task and who had a motivated partner were more willing to engage in argumentation and produced more accurate output (in that case, motivation had an effect on quality as well).

> If the participants' attitude to the task was negative, their own motivation had little effect on the quality and quantity of language output, instead it was the partner's motivation that played a role in the performance of the task. If, on the other hand, the participants had positive attitudes to the task, it was primarily their own motivation that influenced their performance and not the motivation of the interlocutor (p.292).

Another author who linked motivation and quantity of L2 use was Hashimoto (2002), who considered frequency of L2 use as a pre-requisite for L2 acquisition. Hashimoto first examined the different L2 motivation models proposed so far and the different factors that affected L2 use –i.e. input, output and affective variables, among which he highlighted that of WTC. Then, he decided to examine the relationship between L2 learning and L2 communication using the Macintyre's (1994) WTC model and Gardner's (1972) Socioeducational model. Results of this study concluded that motivation and willingness to communicate (WTC) had a direct effect on the frequency of L2 use, while perceived competence and L2 anxiety had a direct effect on WTC –positive in the case of perceived competence and negative in the case of L2 anxiety.

Csizér and Dörnyei's (2005) work, on the other hand, examined the relationship between attitudinal/motivational factors and motivated language behavior, composed by language choice and effort. The authors decided to relate these two components because, citing Dörnyei (2001), they believed that motivation was only indirectly related to learning achievement, since motivation could explain why people behaved the way they did, but it could not explain how successful this behaviour would be. Motivational factors relied once more on seven components, quite similar to the ones that appeared in the previous study but with some variations: integrativeness, instrumentality, vitality of the L2 community (perceived importance and wealth of the L2 communities in question), attitudes towards the L2 speakers/community, cultural interest (appreciation of cultural products of the L2 community), linguistic self-confidence and milieu (social influences derived from the immediate environment). These seven components were examined in relationship with L2 choice and intended effort after analysing the results of a questionnaire distributed in several Hungarian Primary schools. Once this analysis was carried out, results showed that language choice and effort were directly affected by integrativeness only, as what the other variables did was only to feed integrativeness directly or indirectly. The central position of integrativeness in this model, on the other hand, made the authors propose a new definition for this concept so that it could be

better understood. According to this new definition, thus, integrativeness depended on one's ideal self: "if one's ideal self is associated with the mastery of a L2, that is, if the person would like to become proficient in the L2, we can be described as having an integrative disposition" (p.29).

Another point of view when trying to link motivation and L2 development is that of Gardner and Masgonet (2003), who relied on Gardner's (1972) Socio-educational model to explain such relationship. In order to do so, they considered motivation in interaction with the other two components of the Socio-educational model, namely integrativeness (in its traditional definition, that is, the willingness to identify with another language community) and attitudes towards the learning situation, which together shaped the concept of integrative motivation. The study relied on three different hypotheses: 1) the relationships of L2 achievement to measures of attitudes, motivation, and orientations are consistently positive, and the correlation of motivation with achievement in the language is higher than for the other measures; 2) the relationship of attitudes, motivation, and orientations to language achievement will be stronger in second language than in foreign language environments; and 3) the relationship between achievement in another language and attitudes, motivation, and orientations will vary as a function of whether or not students are in elementary school versus secondary school versus university level courses. In order to prove the veracity of these hypotheses, a meta-analysis was conducted including the results of 75 samples of data. Once they did, Gardner and Masgonet (2003) concluded that the first hypotheses was true –the correlation of motivation and achievement was higher than that of attitudes/integrativeness and achievement–, but that, however, the second and third hypothesis did not apply in this case –language learning environment and age did not have clear moderating effects.

Finally, we also analysed a study that tried to explain the relationship between the different types of motivation proposed by Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-determination theory, the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and the degree of proficiency in L2 listening. This study, developed by Vandergrift (2005), collected the results of a group of French learners carrying out a metacognitive awareness listening questionnaire, a motivation questionnaire and a listening comprehension test. Once the analysis was conducted, the author of this paper came to the conclusion that even if no relationship was found between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and listening proficiency, it was quite likely that they influenced listening proficiency. In fact, a negative relationship was found between amotivation and listening proficiency. On the other hand, the use of metacognitive strategies (typical of skilled listeners) was proved to be linked to more self-determined forms of motivation.

After revising all these studies, we can conclude that motivation –no matter of what kind– must be at least related to a greater L2 use which, in turn, leads to L2 proficiency. However, and although this is the greatest contribution of motivation to the L2 learning process, we will later see how motivation is also a key ingredient for autonomous language learning –the relationship between motivation and autonomy is, in fact, very powerful and it is able to operate in different directions: either autonomy leading to motivation, either motivation leading to autonomy (Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan, 2002).

1.3 The teacher

1.3.1 Teacher-centred approaches vs. Student-centred approaches

One of the reasons why teachers are responsible for shaping the language acquisition process is the fact that they can decide how classroom dynamics are going to be. In this case, we differentiate between two specific models: teacher-centred approaches and student-centred approaches[2]. In teacher-centred approaches, the teacher controls everything that happens in the classroom –i.e. what is taught and under what conditions. This approach is also characterized by the following elements: teacher talk exceeds student talk during instruction, instruction is carried out with the entire class at the same time, textbooks guide what is being taught, each episode within the lesson is determined by the teacher, desks and chairs are usually arranged into neat rows facing the chalkboard and the teacher, and students are not free to roam from their seats. On the other hand, in student-centred approaches students assume a certain degree of responsibility for what is taught and how it is learnt and instruction is characterized by the following elements: student talk is equal to or even greater than teacher talk, instruction occurs individually or in small groups, a variety of instructional materials are on hand to enable students to use them independently or in small groups, students determine the direction of the lesson through interaction with the teacher, furniture in the classroom is arranged in a manner which facilitates students to work independently or in groups, and students roam about freely while on-task if it is necessary (Aun, 1994).

As it can be seen from the definitions here proposed, the selection of an instruction approach depends on a series of issues, such as the type of curriculum imposed by the government/education department, the role of teachers and learners in the classroom, the selection of materials and methodology, or the classroom characteristics. Some of these issues are directly related to teachers' decisions, while some others are indirectly related to such

[2] It must be pointed out that these two approaches tend to be presented as extreme opposites –in this chapter, in fact, we will actually describe them in this way–, but they should be rather seen as the two extremes of a continuum.

decisions. However, what is clear is that there is a relationship of some kind between the teacher decisions' and the teaching approach enforced and that we must take it into account given its pedagogical implications.

The type of curriculum that is enforced in the language classroom is usually indirectly related to the teacher's decisions, since the traditional design of curriculums is centralized –it is a government department or agency the one who produces it– and the role of the teacher is thus to implement such curriculum and act as a "classroom manager". This type of curriculum is usually subject-centred, that is, it is designed based on the body of knowledge that learners are supposed to master in order to learn the language. An alternative to this traditional curriculum is the learner-centred curriculum, which focuses on what students need and which gives more importance to the teacher's decisions. This type of curriculum is based on the assumption that language acquisition is the process of acquiring skills rather than a body of language and it therefore has the following aims: to provide learners with efficient learning strategies, to assist learners identify their own preferred ways of learning, to develop skills needed to negotiate the curriculum, to encourage learners to set their own objectives, to encourage learners to adopt realistic goals and time frames and to develop learners' skills in self-evaluation (Nunan, 1988).

Another determinant element in the approach that is enforced in the language classroom is the teacher and the students' roles. Nunan (1988) defines role as "the part that learners and teachers are expected to play in carrying out learning tasks as well as the social and interpersonal relationships between the participants" (p.79). Regarding teachers' roles, Richards and Rodgers (1986 –cited in Nunan, 1988) believe that they depend on several things, such as the types of functions teachers are expected to fulfil, the degree of control the teacher has over how learning takes place, the degree to which the teacher is responsible for content or the interactional patterns that develop between teachers and learners. Taking this into account, Harmer (2007 –cited in Hall, 2011) proposed a list of key classroom roles of the L2 teacher: controller, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, facilitator and so on. The first role he mentions is that of the teacher as controller, which represents the traditional situation where classroom decisions are solely controlled by the teacher (teacher-centred approaches). Teachers control exchanges using an IRF pattern (Initiation-Response-Feedback), directing turn-taking and deciding on topic selection. However, with the arrival of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, there was a change in the balance of power towards the learners' direction, giving learners a more central position in the classroom and making the teacher become rather a participant, an observer, a learner and a facilitator of the communicative process (student-centred approaches). These new roles are based on the

belief that teachers do not cause learning directly, but that they rather provide the conditions for learning to take place. On the other hand, learners' roles not only complement teachers roles, but are said to depend on the method used by the teacher: from passive recipients in the Audiolingual method or in Suggestopedia, to interactors and negotiators in the Communicative Approach, going through autonomous learners in the Silent Way or listeners and performers in the Total Physical Response method[3] (Nunan, 1989).

Teachers and students' roles, on the other hand, shape the way the classroom is going to work. Briggs and Moore (1993 –cited in Hall, 2011), for instance, distinguish two kinds of classrooms depending on the teacher's role: high structure classrooms and low structure classrooms. In high structure classrooms, the teacher organizes learning with little learner involvement in decision-making processes (planning is teacher-centred and teacher-controlled, and classroom procedures are reduced to imposed routines), controls discourse (interaction is mostly based on IRF exchanges and teacher usually asks display and closed questions) and works with rewards and punishment to modify behaviour. In contrast, low structure classrooms encourage learner involvement in decisions about what and how to learn, with teachers organizing classroom procedures as participative decision-making and consultation, encouraging authentic use of language (asking, for example, referential and open questions), or using rewards and punishments to encourage pupils' self-discipline. This type of classroom is crucial in student-centred approaches according to Taylor (1987), since it manages to create a supportive and motivating atmosphere where students are able to take risks and actively participate at their own pace.

These approaches to classroom management also affect the quality and quantity of classroom interaction, which is the key to teaching language for communication. Hall (2011) believes that interaction is not either of one or another type, but that is rather represented in a continuum which reflects all the possible classroom situations between high structure and low structure classrooms. This continuum is defined by its two extremes: at one end, teacher control is maintained though "instructional discourse", teacher and learner roles are fixed and predictable, tasks are teacher-focused and involve the conveying and receiving of information and linguistic accuracy is important; at the other end, we can observe the development of "natural discourse", teacher and learner roles are flexible and negotiated, tasks are group-oriented and meaning-focused and the interaction itself is the focus of learning. It must be pointed out, however, that the use of new technologies has derived into new realities in the classroom. Learners can now participate in learning opportunities when and where they choose

[3] A more comprehensive description of teaching methods will be provided in the following section.

and are able to become independent decision-makers as they become part of English-using communities which lie beyond their teachers' management and knowledge (Hall, 2011).

Finally, teachers shape the approach to be observed by deciding on the method to be implemented and the selection of content and materials to be used. Regarding the method, teacher's decision to adhere to one or another method is not only controversial per se –students may want to take part in this decision–, but it also determines classroom roles and development as it has been already mentioned –i.e. CLT is seen as one of the referential methods in student-centred approaches– and as we will further explore in the following section. As far as content and material selection is concerned, two important issues need to be considered. First of all, it is important to consider how collaborative this process is, because while on teacher-centred approaches teachers decide on everything, in student-centred approaches learners should have a say on such decisions. However, it must be pointed out that student participation needs to be preceded by some prior guidance on the part of the teachers so that students have a more realistic idea of what can be achieved in a given course, so that they are more aware of their role as language learners –i.e. regarding self-evaluation–, and so that classroom activities can relate to their real-life needs. This latest idea makes us think that it is also important to consider the results of this negotiation. According to Taylor (1987), acquisition of an L2 can only take place when learners "are exposed to and engaged in contextually rich, genuine, meaningful communication in that language" (p.46), which implies that teachers need to incorporate a strong communicative, student-centred component in their lessons –i.e. giving opportunities for students to be exposed to and engage in real communication. As a result, if we follow a student-centred approach we should try to work with activities which are meaningful to students and which motivate them to communicate in order to accomplish a specific goal, such as solving a problem, completing a task, or gathering information. It seems clear that, within this approach, students focus on meaning, compared to teacher-centred approaches, where students focus on form. However, it must be pointed out that explicit grammar teaching has a space in communicative contexts, as it can meet students' needs as well –i.e. it can provide students with some supplementary information when they do not have access to so much input in the classroom.

After analysing the different elements that compose teacher-centred and student-centred approaches, we come to the conclusion extensively backed by research that student-centred approaches seem to be more beneficial than teacher-centred approaches –the former creates an atmosphere where learners are more motivated to learn and it allows learners discovering knowledge, constructing it and, thus, being more involved in the learning process. Nevertheless, Aun (1994) believes that teaching has not changed over the past years and that

it is still teacher-centred, even if teachers, curriculums and governments try to show the contrary.

> The evidence, from my personal observation, suggests that teaching practices seem remarkably stable at all level of schooling through the many decades, despite improvements in teacher education and inputs of scholarly knowledge (Alm, 1994:12).

The question is then: if research has proved that student-centred approaches should be implemented given their benefits, why have they not taken off? According to Alm (1994), this could be explained by different factors. First of all, classrooms are dominated with teaching practices that concentrate on definite content and skills that have to be learnt in order that students pass their examinations. Moreover, classroom structures do not facilitate the switch – i.e. physical arrangement of chairs and desks, the amount of content to be covered, the time allotted to tasks, the way of assessment and examination– and revalidate teacher-centred approaches as the most effective strategy for such classrooms. On the other hand, governments and curriculum developers do not insist much on the importance of using student-centred approaches, which explains why teachers only adapt bits and parts of them. This, in turn, has a negative effect on future teachers, which enter the teaching profession learning from teachers who are still doing things in the same way they did many years ago. In the East, these limitations are also reinforced by their traditions and cultural beliefs, as it is complicated to conceive the transfer of responsibilities to students when, in such cultures, the teacher is seen as the source of knowledge, the person who knows best.

Given the great distance from both approaches and the difficulty to go from one to another, it seems vital to consider Alm's (1994) point of view, who believes that these approaches are the two extremes of a continuum. If we assume this, we can consider that there is a myriad of intermediate approaches and that, instead of aiming at a big leap from one approach to another, we should aim at taking incremental steps from one extreme to the other.

1.3.2 Method and methodology

One of the main responsibilities of the foreign language teacher is to decide how teaching and learning are going to take place in the classroom, a decision that has been long studied within the field of language teaching. However, the fact that this decision and everything that revolves around it are popular topics of the language learning literature has resulted in great controversy.

First of all, there tends to be confusion over the right term to be used: is it method? Or should we talk about methodology? Hall (2011) was also concerned about this and decided to revise what a series of authors said on the topic (see Brown, 2001; Thornbury, 2006; Kumaravadivelu, 2006 –cited in Hall, 2011). After doing so, he came to the conclusion that methodology should be used to refer to the pedagogical practices that take place in the classroom –that is, what teachers actually do in the classroom– and that method should be used to refer to the "established methods" constructed by experts in the field. In other words, teachers may decide to follow a method previously designed by an expert or created as a result of their own reflection and, once translated into a series of activities and behaviours within the classroom, this will become their methodology.

Nevertheless, authors do not actually agree in the actual definition of "method". Stern (1983), for example, believed that the concept of "teaching method" had been applied in a very inconsistent way and that, therefore, it could compile a lot of ideas: a method could refer to certain strategies or techniques, but a method could also be a particular point of view of the language, the objectives of language teaching, certain assumptions about the language learner or even certain beliefs about the nature of the language learning process. For that reason, he tried to include all these points of view in his particular definition:

> A method, however ill-defined it may be, is more than a single strategy or a particular technique; it is a "theory" of language teaching… which has resulted from practical and theoretical discussions in a given historical context. It usually implies and sometimes overtly expresses certain objectives, and a particular view of language; it makes assumptions about the language learner; and underlying it are certain beliefs about the nature of the language learning process (p.452-453).

Hall (2011) also explores several definitions of "method" and he cites several authors to make his point. Particularly interesting is for instance the definition provided by Richards and Rodgers (2001), who believe that the term "method" is composed of three elements: approach, technique and design. This may lead us to the following question: should there be a close connection between thoughts (or principles) and actions (or techniques)? That is the point of view of Larsen-Freeman (2002), who tried to explain a great variety of teaching methods using this distinction and analysing the results of their interconnections.

No matter how we define "method", the truth is that teachers must work with this concept, being aware of its existence and being aware of the multiple choices which come associated to this term. Larsen-Freeman (2002) provides several reasons for teachers needing to be familiar with all the different methods used in foreign language teaching. First of all, she believes that teachers come to teacher training with some assumptions, values and beliefs which are mainly

influenced by their experience as students –whether positive or negative –, so they need to work on them in order to reflect on what they want to do and why they want to do it. Once teachers are clear about their values and beliefs, they can choose to stand for their preferred method even if they are constraint to apply it in their actual classes (i.e. their school may impose a certain method or a certain textbook, which imposes its own method). Secondly, knowing about methods can expand the teacher's repertoire of techniques, allowing them to cope with all kind of situations/students. Finally, the concept of "method" is basic knowledge for education professionals, so all teachers must be familiar with it in order to communicate more effectively among them –and communication is in fact key to see how new things are being developed on the area.

Nowadays, methods available in the literature are countless and do not cease to increase. This could be explained due to the fact that methods are responses to changing demands in the language teaching field according to different social, economic, political or educational realities or due to the changes in language theories and psychological perspectives on language learning, which shape the beliefs on how teaching and learning should take place. Bearing this in mind, we will now try to describe some of the most popular methods in order to obtain a better image of the evolution of such social demands and language and psychological theories, as well as their projections on language learning. This may allow us to better understand where we stand nowadays and the implications this can have on our particular case.

1.3.2.1 The grammar-translation method

The grammar-translation method, firstly called the classical method because it was used to teach classical languages such as Latin or Greek, has its origins in the late 18th century and it is a method that emphasizes the teaching of the L2 grammar and the use of translation as its main technique. This method is linked to the study of literature, as it was used to allow students to read and appreciate foreign language literature and, therefore, mainly focused on the development of written rather than oral skills. According to Larsen-Freeman (2002), its use was linked not only to an intellectual development of the students, who were not only able to access foreign literature, but also to the understanding and eventual development of their mother tongue. We must take into account that languages like Latin and Greek were extinct languages and students were not likely to use them outside the classroom, so the rationale for their study should lie on other areas beyond the acquisition of the foreign language.

We may wonder why this method only appeared on the 18th Century, if translation and the teaching of grammar had been developed for ages. However, we must consider that, even if these areas already existed, the combination of both did not become popular until the appearance of the book Praktische Französische Grammatik by Medinger (1783). Stern (1983) also mentions Ollendorf (1840) in the development of the method, as his arrangement of lessons following the scheme "Statement of the rule – vocabulary – translation exercises" became very popular and made other authors like Seidenstücker and Ahn (1855) write textbooks following this arrangement of lessons. In fact, Stern believes that the adaptation of Seidenstücker's French book by Ploetz (1948) turned the grammar-translation method into the most important modern language teaching method in the mid-20th Century.

According to Larsen-Freeman (2002), this method is based on a series of principles (thoughts) about language teaching. The grammar-translation method, for example, assumes that the goals of the teacher are to read literature in the target language (as it is the main expression of culture, superior to spoken language), to learn grammar rules and vocabulary in order to understand texts (the L2 is seen as a system of rules and meanings that can be observed in texts and sentences), and to develop the students' minds through the mental exercise that comes associated to learning a language. When using this method, the teacher is the authority (teacher-centreed classroom) and he/she controls what students learn (teachers transmit knowledge to learners) and say (students rarely initiate interactions). Students, in turn, are expected to learn grammar deductively and memorize vocabulary and their equivalents in their mother tongue in order to develop the ability to translate from one language to the other. Students' mother tongue is in fact crucial in this method, as they use it to understand the language and to communicate in the classroom. Knowledge of the L2 is assessed through written texts including translations, questions about the target culture or grammar activities and it is very important that students are given feedback on their work.

Stern (1983) believes that this method implies the application of the following teaching techniques: 1) teachers explicitly present grammar to students using technical terminology and examples; 2) learners have to learn grammatical rules and vocabulary by heart and then they are faced with exercises where they have to use such rules and vocabulary to translate sentences from and into the L2; and 3) tasks should be increasingly more difficult so that learners can move from translating isolated sentences to whole texts. However, Larsen-Freeman (2002) goes beyond and proposes more alternative techniques that can be exercised within this method. She proposes, for instance, working with reading comprehension questions where students have to show if they have understood a text. Another possibility is making students find antonyms and synonyms in a text, working with cognates and "false friends",

developing grammar and vocabulary with fill-in-the-blanks exercises and memorization, and leading students to practice what they have learnt through composition.

This method was quite criticized because it relied too much on the concept of language as a system of rules, because it did not allow learners to emancipate from their mother tongue, or because it put a big burden on students' memory (Stern, 1983), let alone the unjustified predominance of the written language over the spoken language, which prevents learners to communicate on the L2 (Cook, 2008; Richards and Rodger, 2001 –cited in Hall, 2011). However, this method (or at least a modified version of it) is still used nowadays, as it focuses on grammar –which is important for students–, it maintains the traditional roles of the teacher and the student in the classroom –which makes its implementation easy in large classes and matches many students' views of what language learning is¬–, it relies on the L1 – which makes students feel more confident–, and because translation-based tasks seem to be quite beneficial for language learning (Hall, 2011; Stern, 1983). Larsen-Freeman (2002), in fact, came up with her findings by analyzing an example of this method being carried out in a high-intermediate level English class at a university in Colombia.

1.3.2.2 The direct method

The direct method emerged at the end of the 19th Century in reaction to the grammar-translation method. Its origins are linked to the empowerment of the field of phonetics and to the era of international business and travel, which put communication in the foreign language at the centre of the language learning field, especially focusing on the use of spoken language.

The development of this method was possible thanks to some practical unconventional teaching reformers such as Berlitz and Gouin, who believed that improvement in language learning was necessary taking into account the new realities in the international word of industry, trade or travel (Stern, 1983). Afterwards, the method continued developing in other places –i.e. The Cleveland Plan in the USA (Sauzé, 1929)– and influencing language teaching in different ways –i.e. in the UK, there was a compromise to adopt the emphasis on the spoken language of this method and in countries like Prussia or France the method influenced changes in ministerial guidelines and course books.

This method, thus, focuses on spoken everyday language rather than literary language (language is mainly spoken and culture is more than literature) and tries to discourage the use of translation, as meaning is supposed to be conveyed through the L2 (teachers and students should avoid the use of the L1). However, this is only the cornerstone of this method, as there

are some other principles sustaining it (Larsen-Freeman, 2002). Teachers, for example, have to make sure that students learn how to communicate and think in the target language. Once again, they are supposed to direct the activity but, in this case, students have a very important role as well: they have to communicate as much as possible, initiating interaction as often as teachers. Areas emphasized are in fact the development of oral skills (listening, speaking and pronunciation) and vocabulary, although this does not mean that there is no room for written skills or grammar. Nevertheless, syllabuses should be based on situations or topics, and not on grammar content –grammar should be taught inductively, with students trying to figure out the rules after analysing examples. Finally, students should be assessed on their capacity to use the language (performance), and not based on their grammatical knowledge. A similar summary of principles is provided by Hall (2011), who displays Richards and Rodgers' (2001) list of principles for this method:

- Classroom interaction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
- Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.
- Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question-and-answer exchanges between teachers and students in small, intensive classes.
- Grammar was taught inductively.
- New teaching points were introduced orally.
- Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.
- Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
- Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized (p.85).

Larsen-Freeman (2002) proposed a series of teaching techniques to develop this method, which mainly focused on the development of spoken language. One of the most interesting techniques, for instance, is reading aloud written passages, as it allows students to practice pronunciation and teachers to test students' oral comprehension. Moreover, Stern (1983) believes that this kind of activities allow teachers to implicitly introduce new vocabulary and new grammar, always using the L2. Larsen-Freeman also mentions conversation practice, which could focus on the use of certain grammar structures. In this kind of exercises, students could be also encouraged to self-correct themselves.

The direct method introduced some positive innovations in the language learning field –i.e. the development of inventiveness among teachers and non-translational techniques in language learning, or the creation of new types of exercises that were afterwards used in other methods among other things. However, this method had its limitations as well, and some elements of this approach were questioned. Stern (1983), for example, believed that it

extended the repertoire for language instruction at early stages but that it provided little help for language instruction in advanced stages. On the other hand, Hall (2011) outlined that it was very complicated to recreate the ways in which children learn their L1 in the classroom –this method drew on the belief that learning a foreign language was similar to acquiring a first language. Weihua (2004 –cited in Hall, 2011) argued that it could only be enforced in small classes, where success was almost guaranteed just because learners learn better in small classes. Finally, Brown (2001 –cited in Hall, 2011) criticized the fact that teachers were still at the centre of the activity within this method, making them quite responsible of the success of learners and the success of the method itself.

Despite the tough criticism, this method is still in use nowadays, even if it is not widespread. It is used, for example, in the Berlitz chain of language schools under the name of "the Berlitz method" and Larsen-Freeman (2002) based her analysis on an Italian middle school class where they were using it. However, it must be said that what truly remains nowadays are those innovative principles that it introduced in the field, such as teaching exclusively in the L2 or focusing on the spoken language rather than on the written language.

1.3.2.3 The reading method

This method became very popular during the 1920s among British and American educators and it focused on the training of reading comprehension. Stern (1983), in fact, cites several authors who devoted to this method during the first half of the 20th Century. West (1926), for example, believed that there should be an emphasis on reading because, according to him, it was what students needed the most –at least in his context in India– and because it was one of the easiest skills to work on. For that reason, he designed readings with controlled vocabulary and regular repetition of new words. In the meantime, Coleman (1929) stated that there was a need to concentrate in reading comprehension in American schools. Stern (1983) also cites Bond (1953), who developed a reading method approach between 1920 and 1940 at Chicago University based on the provision of reading strategies and graded reading materials.

This method is strongly concerned with the practice, as it fosters the creation of activities with practical uses. In fact, according to this method the goal of language instruction has to be one of practical attainable utility.

Regarding the teaching techniques of the reading method, it must be said that this method divided the learning process in three key stages: vocabulary control, intensive reading for detailed study and extensive rapid reading for general comprehension –although other

techniques of L1 reading were also introduced. Within this method, the target language was introduced orally in the classroom, as the development of pronunciation and "inner speech" was considered beneficial for reading comprehension. However, there was not a taboo when it came to using the L1 in the classroom as well (Stern, 1983).

1.3.2.4 The audio-lingual method

The audio-lingual method was developed in America in the mid-20th Century. It has its origins on the "Army Method", a language learning method which appeared during the World War II as US army forces tried to teach languages on a huge scale to their soldiers and collaborators. In this context, the army needed their students to improve their oral skills –as they would be mainly using the language orally– so they decided to foster oral/aural work and pronunciation through drills and conversation practice. Nevertheless, the method as we know it nowadays was not clearly defined and identified until the late 1950s, when it incorporated some theoretical assumptions based on the descriptive, contrastive and structural linguistic of the 50s and the 60s (see for example Fries, 1945), and some theoretical assumptions extracted from behaviourism (Skinner, 1957), the most popular "scientific" approach to learning (habit formations is based on a stimulus-reinforcement-response sequence). Quoting Rivers (1964:19-22), Hall (2011) thus states that audiolingualism is based on the following assumptions:

- Foreign language learning is basically a mechanical process of habit formation;
- Language skills are learned more effectively if items of the foreign language are presented in spoken form before written form;
- Analogy provides a better foundation for foreign language than analysis;
- The meanings which the words of a language have for the native speaker can be learned only in a matrix of allusions to the culture of the people who speak that language (p.87).

As a result, this method mainly consisted on the use of drills to foster the acquisition of certain grammatical sentence patterns, and "the way to acquire the sentence patterns of the target language was through conditioning –helping learners to respond correctly to stimuli through shaping and reinforcement" (Larsen-Freeman, 2002:35). This author also revised some other principles of this method, which help us understand this method even better. Teachers, for example, should aim at students learning how to communicate in the L2 and learning how to use it without thinking, as something automatic –they must forget their habits in their mother tongue and create new habits in the target language. Once again, teachers hold the most important role, as they direct and control the language behaviour of students and they provide the model that students should imitate. Most interaction is in fact teacher-student

interaction –there is only student-student interaction when students are practicing drills in pairs–, with the teacher always initiating it. Within this method, classes revolve around a dialog that students must learn through imitation and repetition and which allows them to learn new structural patterns and, eventually, new vocabulary –grammatical patters first, vocabulary comes afterwards. However, grammar is taught inductively, as students have to figure out the rules after analysing the examples provided. Regarding the areas and language skills emphasized by this method, oral skills are obviously the most important ones, the natural order of skills being: 1) listening, 2) speaking, 3) reading, and 4) writing. Within this frame, pronunciation is taught from the beginning so that students do not get bad habits. Finally, it must be said that although this method can be carried out in a traditional classroom, it was initially conceived to be used in a language laboratory, with students making use of tapes and similar technologies.

Regarding the teaching techniques of this method, we have already seen how dialog memorization and repetition drills are crucial here in the development of the L2. However, Larsen-Freeman (2002) suggests some other possible techniques associated to this method, such as the use of other types of drills –chain drills, single-slot and multiple-slot substitutions drills, transformation drills or question-and-answer drills–, the use of minimal pairs for pronunciation or even grammar games to practice a given grammatical structure.

The audio-lingual method was especially influential between 1959 and 1966, but it soon started to be criticized on theoretical grounds (Stern, 1983): its theoretical basis was found to be weak –as Larsen-Freeman (2002:54) said: “language acquisition could not possibly take place through habit formation since people create and understand utterances they have never heard before”. Empirical research was not able to prove the effectiveness of these techniques in the long run and students found this method quite boring. According to Chomsky (1966 –cited in Hall, 2011), humans are able to generate language creatively, so teaching them through repetition and drilling can be boring and demotivating, as well as not very successful. Nevertheless, we can still see places where this method is being used (see experiment carried out by Larsen-Freeman, 2002) and we cannot deny the contributions it has provided to the field: it was the first method based on linguistic and psychological principles, it tried to present/teach the language so that it was not too abstract, it encouraged syntactical progression and the practice of different features of the language without using translations, and it introduced specific techniques of auditory and oral practice –i.e. drill-based activities, dialogue-building and so on (Stern, 1983).

1.3.2.5 The audiovisual method

The audiovisual method was first developed in France in the 1950s at the Centre de Recherche et d'Etude pour la Diffusion du Français (CREDIF). This research centre created a small number of programs for different levels based on this method –i.e. Voix et Images de France (Adult beginners) and Bonjour Line (Young children)– and afterwards some adaptions and new versions of these programs were made in America (Renard and Heinle, 1969 –cited in Stern, 1983), the UK (Gross and Mason, 1965 –cited in Stern, 1983) and Canada. At the beginning, this method was applied in schools following a strict application of certain rules/principles, but then a more flexible view of teaching was introduced.

According to experts on the field, language learning was divided in three different stages: 1) learners become familiar with everyday language; 2) learners are able to talk about general topics; and 3) learners use a more specialized discourse. The method mainly consisted in presenting learners with a visual scenario so that they would be involved in meaningful utterances and contexts and in order that they could develop their language skills at the first stage of the language learning process (Stern, 1983). As in the audio-linguistic method, language is learnt without being analysed –"The learner is encouraged to absorb in a global fashion the utterances he hears on the tape in the context he sees in the screen". What changes in this case is that the stimulus is the visual presentation, which "is intended to simulate the social context in which language is used" (Stern, 1983:468).

Within this method, a lesson should develop following these stages: 1) presentation, where the teacher presents a filmstrip together with a tape; 2) explanation, where the meaning of what has been said and seen in the images and tape is explained though pointing, demonstrating, selective listening, questions and answers, and where students start practicing and memorizing the dialogue; and 3) exploitation, where students gradually emancipate from the filmstrip-tape, trying to recall the information learnt and trying to use it in different scenarios (Stern, 1983).

The audiovisual method had its positive aspects, as once again it was based on linguistic and psychological principles, it regarded language teaching as the presentation of meaningful spoken communication and it tried to exploit technology (videos) for language learning purposes. However, it was also criticized because it presented quite rigid teaching sequences that had not even been proved to be the most effective ones, and because, as in the direct method, conveying meaning just through images was too demanding (Stern, 1983).

1.3.2.6 The cognitive theory

The cognitive theory appeared in the mid-1960s as an alternative to the criticized audio-lingual method, considered by some as an updated version of this method (Diller 1971, 1975, 1978 – cited by Stern, 1983) and considered by others as an updated grammar-translation theory (Carroll, 1966 –cited in Stern, 1983). The truth is that, although this method did not introduce many new techniques, it had some theoretical influence on the language learning field (Stern, 1983).

The aim of this method was the conscious acquisition of language as a meaningful system – that is, understanding and controlling the language in all its manifestations as a coherent meaningful system–, an idea influenced by cognitive psychology and transformational grammar. According to Diller (1978 –cited in Stern, 1983), this theory was based on several theoretical assumptions: 1) a living language is characterized by rule-governing-creativity; 2) the rules of grammar are psychologically real, that is, even if learners apply rules automatically, this does not mean that such rules need to be learnt automatically; 3) humans are specially equipped to learn languages; and 4) a living language is a language in which we can think, so we need to learn how to think in the foreign language –we need practice rather than drill.

Given these principles and assumptions, this method proposed certain teaching techniques, which consisted on the explicit teaching of phonological, grammatical and lexical rules in order to force students to use intellectual understanding (not habit formation), and on a subsequent meaningful practice. With such a proposal, the method did not only rediscover some valuable features of the grammar-translation and the direct methods, but it also questioned the weakest points of the audio-lingual method. Nevertheless, such criticism may have overlooked the merits of audiolingualism without providing too much evidence (Stern, 1983).

1.3.2.7 The Silent Way

This method has its origins in the work of Gattegno (1963) and it was founded on the belief that language learning was a personal enterprise that was initiated and directed by individual learners themselves. Hall (2011) cites Richard and Rodgers (2001) when trying to define how learning should take place according to this method: 1) Learning is facilitated if the learner discovers or creates rather than remembers and repeats what is to be learned; 2) learning is facilitated by accompanying physical objects; and 3) learning is facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned. In that way, it shares certain principles with the Cognitive

approach (Celce-Murcia, 1991 – cited by Larsen-Freeman, 2002), which states that learners are actively responsible for their own learning, formulating hypothesis to discover the rules of the L2.

According to Larsen-Freeman (2002), the Silent Way is based on a series of principles that we here summarize. The goals of the teacher, for example, are that students grow independent –so he/she must promote independence, autonomy and responsibility among students–, and that the students use the language for self-expression, actively engaging in exploring the language at the same time. As Gattegno puts it, "the teacher works with the students; the student works on the language" (Larsen-Freeman, 2002:65). As a matter of fact, in teacher-student interaction the teacher is mostly silent, listening to what students say (thus enhancing student-student interaction) and allowing them to be more independent –he/she may only talk to give clues, not to model the language. Regarding the teaching/learning process, we could talk about two different stages (Crawford-Lange, 1987): 1) conscious intellectual commitment to mental action –students try to build on what they already know to learn sounds in the foreign language and eventually learn new words and sentences, while teachers try to create situations for students to pay attention to a given structure so that they can infer meaning through context (never through translation); 2) retaining or assimilating the product of the conscious mental action –stage which takes place while students sleep. In this method, all four skills are worked equally, although listening and speaking come first and pronunciation plays a key role (it is taught from the very beginning). Grammar, on the other hand, is never taught explicitly and vocabulary is very restricted at the beginning. Nevertheless, the syllabus is developed according to the students' needs, which the teacher constantly evaluates. Finally, errors are seen as something natural and necessary for learning in the Silent Way and, although teachers are constantly listening to what students are saying, they should not interfere, as it is better that students self-correct themselves.

The teaching techniques of this method are organized to follow a certain sequence. First of all, teachers focus on the pronunciation of phonemes, where they can use a sound-colour chart to represent all the sounds in the foreign language. Students may be asked to repeat sounds based on what they know or based on the model provided by the teacher and then practice them over and over as the teacher points to the chart to indicate the sounds that should be spoken. Words are introduced with a set of colour rods which can be manipulated to stimulate speech. Rods can be used to convey meaning –i.e. identifying rods with specific words or different prefixes and grammatical tenses– or to explain things in a visible way –i.e. inversion subject-verb. During all this process, the teacher tries to be in silence as much as possible, even in error correction –he/she may encourage peer correction and self-correction through all

kind of gestures– and students do all the talking and the recombining of material, assuming the responsibility for their own learning (Crawford-Lange, 1987; Larsen-Freeman, 2002; Hall, 2011).

This method is not commonly used nowadays, although Larsen-Freeman (2002) provided an example of a secondary classroom in Brazil where they were using it. However, it must be said that the Silent Way influences some teaching and learning practices nowadays –i.e. discovery learning activities where learners work things out by themselves.

1.3.2.8 Desuggestopedia (Suggestopedia)

This method, proposed by Lozanov (1978), is based on the theory of suggestology and proposes that learning can be accelerated by the process of suggestion, relaxation and concentration, which can be enhanced by the physical environment in which learning takes place (Hall, 2011). Therefore, the method intends to remove psychic tensions by providing students with a secure atmosphere, since "if the unconscious mind is tense or constricted by social norms that tell students that they can learn only so much so fast, then learning is hampered. However, if these psychic tensions can be removed and kept away, students can learn more in a shorter period of time" (Crawford-Lange, 1987:134). This method is also part of what Celce-Murcia (1991) called an affective-humanistic approach –an approach in which there is respect for the students' feelings (cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2002).

Regarding the principles that guide this method, we should point out that one of the most important issues in suggestopedia is the place where learning takes place, which must enhance a cheerful and motivating atmosphere. We must take into account that the main aim of this method is that students remove their negative emotions and that they are relaxed while learning. For that reason, in order to fulfil these principles learning can take place while sooth background music is played and while students are engaged in yoga breathing. Teachers can also activate "peripheral learning" by displaying posters with information about the language –i.e. grammar features. The goal of teachers in this process is to activate the para-conscious part of the mind of their students so that they can learn, even in a non-conscious way. Teachers are thus the authority and students must respect them in order to trust them when they say that learning and succeeding is easy –if students trust the teacher, they feel more secure, confident and spontaneous. The lesson is divided in three different stages (Crawford-Lange, 1987; Larsen-Freeman, 2002): 1) review of the preceding day's work with games and conversation among other things; 2) new material (grammar and vocabulary) is introduced in

the traditional way – through dialogues using familiar situations; and 3) séance –it is divided in an active and passive part that aims at unconscious memorization:

- Receptive phase: teacher reads a dialog with a dramatic intonation following the students' breathing rhythm. The teacher can also put music so that students move in rhythm with slow movements while the teacher interprets the dialogue artistically.
- Activation phase: student work on the material in very different ways (i.e. dramatizations, games, songs, question-and-answer exercises). Students can take up a new identity, as this helps them to feel less inhibited and more secure and open.

This method has not been very successful, however, as it comes with a lot of drawbacks: it can only be used in classroom contexts, we need to create a comfortable learning environment that may not always be possible to create, suggestopedic teachers require dramatic ability and specialized training in the method, and it is a method conceived to be applied alone –it cannot be mixed with other methods (Crawford-Lange, 1987). Nevertheless, even if its application may result unrealistic, it could be interesting to get some influences from it –i.e. students need to be relaxed in order to learn more in less time.

1.3.2.9 Community Language Learning

Community Language Learning is based on the Counseling-Learning approach by Charles A. Curran, who believed that the way to deal with the students' fears was to become a "language counsellor" who can understand such fears and help students overcome them. Therefore, the teacher in this method has a "consultant" role and learners take the responsibility for lesson content (Hall, 2011).

Larsen-Freeman (2002) talks about the different principles sustaining this method and she suggests that, for example, the relationship between the teacher and the student goes through five different stages in this method:

- In stages I, II and III, students are quite dependent on the teacher. The teacher must facilitate whatever the students need in order to enhance fluency.
- In stages IV and V, students do not rely so much on the teacher and they feel more secure. The teacher can focus more on promoting accuracy rather than fluency.

Taking all this into account, the class revolves around a conversation created collaboratively among the students and the teacher. Learners usually sit in a circle with the

teacher outside it, and try to communicate among each other, even using the L1 –although in those cases the teacher helps translating and formulating utterances in the L2. This conversation is recorded and then students listen to it, come up with the transcript and work on it –i.e. they provide translations, examine grammar and so on. Nevertheless, even if grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation are directed based on this material at the beginning, it must be said that later on the teacher may decide how to address these areas in a different way. Larsen-Freeman (2002) suggests that these lessons should include six elements which are necessary for non-defensive learning to happen according to Curran: 1) security; 2) aggression (students show what they have learnt for "self-assertion"); 3) attention (students must be able to pay attention to different things at the same time); 4) reflection (students need to have time to reflect about what they are learning and about what they are experiencing); 5) retention (integration of new material); and 6) discrimination (students must be able to recognize different forms at different language levels in the target language). This method, in fact, takes the students' feelings very seriously, as negative feelings are believed to hinder their learning. For that reason, teachers have the responsibility to enhance students' security using the students' L1 –especially at early phases–, giving clear instructions of what they are going to do, establishing times for all activities and giving reasonable amounts of information. Finally, errors should be dealt in a non-threatening way, aiming at self-correction, and testing should include tasks that students are able to do in order not to discourage them.

We have already mentioned some of the teaching techniques of this method, such as recording students' conversations, transcribing them or reflecting on the experience. However, Larsen-Freeman (2002) proposes some other additional techniques, such as that of reflective listening (students listen to the tape while being relaxed, with their eyes opened or shut), that of the human computer (the student selects a sentence and asks the teacher to pronounce it while trying to copy it afterwards) or that of small group tasks to work collaboratively.

Community Language Learning was criticized for being of exclusive use on institutional language programs. However, it spread some very positive learning principles –i.e. learner-centred participation and group-work, learner autonomy & teachers' facilitative role in the classroom, and so on (Hall, 2011).

1.3.2.10 Total physical response

This method was developed by Asher (1977) and it was based on the "comprehension approach", which states that "language learning should start first with understanding [through extensively listening to the L2] and later proceed to production" (Winitz, 1891:107 –cited in

Larsen-Freeman, 2002). As a result, the Total Physical Response (TPR) method tried to link physical actions to learning based on the belief that young children receive comprehensible input in their L1 in the form of commands and encouragement to act (Hall, 2011). Asher himself stated that "the fastest, least stressful way to achieve understanding of any target language is to follow directions uttered by the instructor (without native language translation)" (cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2002:108).

According to the TPR's principles (Larsen-Freeman, 2002), students must learn the L2 in the same way children learn their mother tongue, enjoying the experience of learning how to communicate in a foreign language. Teachers direct the classroom at the beginning, as they are the ones that give all commands to students. However, after some hours of instruction, if students are able to talk, they may be able to take the teacher's role –teachers then try to reply in a non-verbal way. The learning process is indeed divided in the following phases: 1) the teacher gives commands and performs such commands with students; 2) students show understanding by doing actions themselves; 3) the teacher recombines elements to develop flexibility; 4) students read and write the commands they have learnt; and 5) students issue the commands. As we already suggested, the language skill that is mostly emphasized is that of listening comprehension, as it is the source of input for students. On the other hand, the areas that are worked the most are those of vocabulary and grammar. Regarding the students' feelings, TPR shows a great concern to reduce students' anxiety, which is achieved by making them speak only when they are ready to, by not aiming at perfection (error is expected), by creating an enjoyable atmosphere and by giving them information little by little in order to allow success.

Regarding the techniques which can be used within this method, Larsen-Freeman (2002) mentions three of them: using commands to direct behaviour, role reversal (students giving commands to teachers), and action sequence (sequencing several commands to turn them into a complex series of commands that make up a whole procedure).

This method has not been a fully implemented method within ELT, as it has been argued that it has no potential beyond the beginners' level. Nevertheless, teachers may draw on it from time to time, especially when teaching young learners (Hall, 2011).

1.3.2.11 Communicative language teaching or communicative language approach (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) or the Communicative Approach is a method which emerged in Europe and the USA in the 1970s and which became the dominant approach within Western ELT in the late 20th Century (Hall, 2011).

If we revise CLT literature, we may realize that this approach seemed to mean different things for different people and that it was translated in different classroom practices across different social and educational contexts. Nevertheless, Larsen-Freeman (2002) establishes that the key to implementing a Communicative Approach relies on two mainstays: 1) teaching the L2 to perform certain functions (Wilking, 1976 –cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2002); and 2) developing a communicative competence among students (Hymes, 1972 –cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2002).

Many authors have tried to define what the concept of communicative competence comprises, suggesting different models of communicative competence (see Uso-Juan and Martínez Flor, 2006). Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) proposed, for example, a model in which the communicative competence was composed of four main competences: 1) grammatical competence –knowledge of the language code; 2) sociolinguistic competence –knowledge of the sociocultural rules of use in a particular context; 3) strategic competence –knowledge of how to use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to handle breakdowns in communication; and 4) discourse competence –knowledge of achieving coherence and cohesion in a spoken/written text. Savignon (1983) also based her model in the same components, but she went beyond trying to describe the relationship among them. Bachman (1987), on the other hand, proposed a model based on three key components: language competence, strategic competence and psychomotor skills. Language competence was composed by two sub-competences, namely organizational competence –grammatical and textual (discourse) competence–, and pragmatic competence –which refers to illocutionary competence (knowledge of pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions) and sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of sociolinguistic conventions for performing acceptable language functions in a given context). Meanwhile, the author believes that the strategic competence is the competence which allows speakers to employ certain elements within language competence depending on the context, thus negotiating meaning. Lastly, psychomotor skills refer to the mode in which competence is performed: receptive (oral or visual) or productive (aural or visual). Uso-Juan and Martínez Flor (2006) themselves revise all these models in order to eventually propose their own, which intends to tackle the limitations of all the previous models. This model is composed of five categories: discourse competence,

which is at the core of the model, and then linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, intercultural competence and strategic competence directly influencing the former.

No matter how we define communicative competence, its main contribution to the CLT method is the importance of teaching how to use the language in a variety of situations and with a variety of speakers, emphasizing the use of "real-life" language and emphasizing "genuine" communication (Hymes, 1972 –cited in Hall, 2011). This is, in fact, one of the main principles of the CLT method, which considers that everything that is done in the classroom must have a communicative purpose. Larsen-Freeman (2002) summarizes other principles of this method regarding the roles of teachers and students, the characteristics of the teaching/learning process, or the areas/language skills emphasized. Within this method, for instance, students are expected to work in small groups using the target language as much as possible to enact their role of communicators who are engaged in negotiation of meaning – student-student interaction is, indeed, the most common type of interaction. Meanwhile, the teacher takes the role of an advisor and a facilitator and supervises students' work by going from one group to the other. In order for this method to be duly performed, students must engage in communicative tasks which have a meaningful purpose and which are as authentic as possible (based on authentic materials or on authentic situations), as this is not only helpful for them, but it is also motivating. Finally, this method promotes the development of the four language skills from the beginning, as negotiation of meaning can occur in written and oral communication, and it emphasizes language functions over language forms. In fact, teachers must evaluate students' fluency, not students' accuracy.

We have already mentioned that in order to enforce a communicative approach, we need to provide students with communicative tasks. However, what do we mean by "communicative tasks"? Hedge (2000) suggests that communicative tasks should follow Brumfit's (1984) model of the "natural language use": classroom interaction should be as close as possible to real life interaction among native speakers. In order for "natural language use" to happen, certain conditions should be met: students must focus on meaning and not on form, the decision on topics/opinions to be discussed should be decided by students spontaneously, there must be negotiation of meaning between speakers, there must be an information/opinion gap so that students are genuinely interested in the task, students must put to practice certain strategic competences and teachers must try to correct as less as possible. Another key aspect of communicative tasks according to Hedge (2000) is that of authenticity, which not only involves an authentic use of the language as Brumfit proposed, but it also involves the use of authentic materials. There has been a lot of controversy regarding the positive and negative outcomes of using authentic materials. Some authors believe that it is the only way students can get used to

authentic language from everyday life situations, while others think that introducing authentic materials too soon may discourage students (see Widdowson, 1979). However, this method supports its use in a rational way, selecting materials in accordance to the level of proficiency of students, and considering them key in order that students are able to easily transfer what they learn in class to the real world. Taylor (1987), on the other hand, believes that communicative tasks should be of a certain kind in order to meet all these criteria and proposes some examples, such as goal- or task-oriented group projects, problem-solving activities, information-gathering activities or task-oriented communication with invited native speakers.

CLT has been traditionally divided into two different approaches: a strong form which believes that language should be learnt only by using it, and a weak form, which suggests that learners should carry out pre-communicative language-focused activities before they move on to real and meaningful communication (Hall, 2011:94). Even if the later has always been more popular, both approaches have been widely enforced all over the world and CLT is a method which is still in use in many places. Nevertheless, it should be said that CLT has received a lot a criticism. Crook (2008 –cited in Hall, 2011), for example, wonders whether all activities are justifiable as long as they allow learners to communicate, while Brumfit (1984 –cited in Hall, 2011) believes that fluency might be over-emphasized at the expense of accuracy within this method. Hall (2011) himself points out that some of the communicative activities proposed by this approach may not be as genuine as they are supposed to be. Bax (2003 –cited in Hall, 2011), on the other hand, states that CLT may not be appropriate for all cultures and contexts –i.e. Asian students may not feel comfortable when asked to communicate freely in the classroom.

1.3.2.12 Content-based approaches

Content-based approaches were born in the 1970s with the introduction of “language across the curriculum”, whose aim was to promote reading and writing in a foreign language in subjects that were not necessarily language classes. This approach then developed, turning into the integration of language learning and content learning, and was then translated into different programs across different countries –i.e. Immersion programs in Canada, Content-based instruction (CBI) in the USA or Content-and-language integrated learning (CLIL) in Europe (Dalton-Puffer, 2011).

The guiding principle of this method is that some subject matter content is used for language teaching purposes. However, Larsen-Freeman (2002) lists other principles that sustain this method –i.e. teaching should build on students’ previous experience and the

teacher's role is to "scaffold" the linguistic content students need to develop their communicative competence, which involves all four language skills. According to her, this method is quite motivating for students, as students use the language as a means to an end and work with authentic material. In fact, she suggests that this method is closely connected to task-based instruction and to participatory approaches given its "use to learn" approach.

Content-based approaches, however, do not only consist on immersion programs –although it is the most popular application of this approach. In fact, within content-based approaches we can find some other types of programs, such as the adjunct model (students take a content course and a language course oriented to the previous one), sheltered-language instruction (NNSs studying in a foreign country and getting language assistance from teachers/the institution), competency-based instruction (learning the language while learning how to cope with real-life tasks) or whole language approach (students see language as a whole, working with whole texts "top-down").

This approach is eventually becoming very popular in Spain, where CLIL methodologies have been implemented in many public and private schools in an effort to turn them into bilingual institutions. As a result, some questions are beginning to arise: could CLIL have a detrimental effect on students' L1 development? Are our students ready to process complicated language and content at the same time? Could this negatively affect the assimilation of such content?

1.3.2.13 Participatory approach

This method originated through the work of Paulo Freire in the early 1960s, although it did not become popular until the 1980s. As in the previous method, the aim is to integrate content and language. However, what changes in this method is the nature of content, which is based on issues of concern of students –the goal is "to help students understand the social, historical or cultural forces that affects their lives and then help empower students to take action and make decisions in order to gain control over their lives" (Wallerstein, 1983 –cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2002:150).

Larsen-Freeman (2002) extracts the principles of this method from an experience in a class for immigrants where the teacher and the students have to think of solutions for a problem that one of the students has (Elsa Auerbach's presentation in SIT [1993] –"Participatory Approaches: Problem Posing and Beyond"). After analysing this example, she came to the conclusion that these were the principles sustaining the method: 1) what happens in the

classroom has to be connected to the students' everyday lives; 2) the curriculum is not a predetermined product but the result of an ongoing context-specific problem-posing process; 3) knowledge is constructed collaboratively; 3) language taught is extracted from the materials that originate from students' context; and 4) students are the ones who have to evaluate their own learning.

1.3.2.14 Task-based approach or Task-based learning (TBL)

Task-based learning has its origins in the strong approach of Communicative Language Teaching (Hall, 2011; Willis and Willis, 2004), as its syllabus is linked to the realization of notions and functions and as it also encourages language use in the classroom. Nevertheless, TBL ended up distancing itself from CLT as it placed tasks at the centre of this method –tasks determined syllabus planning and methodology. Prabhu (1987 –cited in Hall, 2011 and Willis and Willis, 2004) and his Bangalore Project were seen as the first experimental proposal of this method.

The aim of this method is that learners work to complete a task while using the language in a natural context (language to achieve outcomes). According to Willis and Willis (2004), this method is thus based on a sequence of communicative tasks (instead of language items) where students comprehend, manipulate, produce or interact in the L2 and where the focus is on meaning rather than on form –although some attention is also given to language form in order to avoid fossilization and in order to foster efficiency (Skehan, 1992, 1996 –cited in Willis and Willis, 2004).

Given the importance of the task in this method, everything revolves around it in the language classroom. Teachers' role, for example, is to give students clear instructions on what they have to do –using pre-tasks to orientate students if necessary– and to make sure that students are involved in the project, while students' role is to complete the task the best they can. Assessment, in fact, is based on how successful students were at completing the task, not on the language used (Larsen-Freeman, 2002). Once this is taken care of, communication among students and with the teacher will arise and the L2 will be developed in the process.

In order to fulfil the principles of this method, we must pay attention to two different things: to come up with a series of appropriate tasks and to sequence them effectively. Regarding the criteria for sequencing tasks, authors like Candlin (1987), Stern (1992) and Skehan (1996, 1998) –cited in Willis and Willis (2004)– propose making this decision based on linguistic and cognitive complexity. Regarding the type of task that should be included in this approach, there

are certain issues to be taken into account. First of all, these tasks should be similar to real world tasks, especially at advanced stages –with less proficient students we can use tasks that build up gradually to something which reflects more directly real world tasks. Secondly, tasks should be organized in different stages (Willis, 1996 –cited in Hall, 2011): they must start with a pre-task to introduce the topic, then follow up with a phase where the task itself is carried out by students, and finally finish with a stage where learners analyse and practice the language that was used. The last thing which needs to be taken into account in order to decide whether a task is appropriate or not for this method is its typology. Prabhu (1987 –cited in Willis and Willis, 2004), for instance, suggested that tasks should be of one of these types: an information- gap task –which requires the exchange of information to complete the task–, a reasoning-gap task –where students have to discuss some information previously inferred from the material provided–, or a problem-solving task. Stern (1992 –cited by Willis and Willis, 2004), does not talk about certain types of tasks, but mentions the requirements that a task should meet in order to be considered –i.e. tasks should make students give and follow instructions, gather and exchange information, solve problems, give informal talks in the classroom, or take part in role plays and drama activities. Meanwhile, Willis (1996 –cited in Willis and Willis, 2004) believes that appropriate tasks must combine a selection of topics of interest for the learner with a number of operations that students should be able to carry out –i.e. listing, ordering and sorting, problem-solving, sharing personal experiences and creative tasks.

Even if this method is still in use nowadays, it has received a lot of criticism. Some authors, for example, claim that an exact definition of TBL is needed, as there are significant differences in the way it has been conceptualized by its different proponents. Some others wonder if it is possible to teach only through tasks, as tasks alone may not sustain an entire pedagogical approach (Seedhouse, 1999 –cited in Hall, 2011). Finally, another criticism is that, following this method, learners' language skills could be limited to those of the classroom tasks. No matter how pertinent that criticism is, what is clear is that work still needs to be done on the field. Some examples of related research at the moment revolve around the links between tasks and interaction (i.e. which variables in tasks generate more negotiation of meaning), the differences of a particular task depending on the context or depending on how many times we perform it, or how to introduce form-focused interaction for instance.

1.3.2.15 Learning Strategy Training

This method has some things in common with cooperative learning, the method which we will explain right after: the fact that the role of the language learner is central and the fact that

the two of them are not comprehensive methods, and therefore they tend to be used to complement some other methods, such as content-based, task-based or participatory approaches.

Learning strategy training has its origins in Rubin's (1975 –cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2002) work, who decided to investigate what "good language learners" did to become successful in language learning and thus to identify the learning strategies they used. Once these strategies were identified, some other authors suggested that they could be taught to the rest of the students so that all students could benefit from them and improve their language skills.

Larsen-Freeman (2002) provides us with a list of principles which sustain this method based on an experience she observed. According to her, teachers should value and build upon the students' prior knowledge and learning experience, and they must try to provide students not only with language training, but also with learning strategy training –these strategies may have to be "learnt" if students do not inherently possess them. On the other hand, students need to learn how to transfer and use these strategies in different contexts, and they also need to become more independent in the language learning process, managing to monitor and self-assess their learning.

Hedge (2000:85) mentions a very similar concept, that of "learner training", to refer to the need of raising students' awareness of what is involved in learning a foreign language so that they become more involved, active and responsible in their own learning. According to her, teachers must present students with three kind of activities to enhance learner training: 1) activities which help learners to reflect on learning –activities which transfer responsibility to students and which make them reflect on their own language skills and on their learning styles; 2) activities which train strategies and equip learners to be active –the area concerned in learning strategy training; and 3) activities which encourage learners to monitor and check their progress. Regarding the second category, which is the one more closely connected to the method we are here analysing, Chamot and O'Malley (1994 –cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2002) distinguish the types of strategies which are essential to foster language learning improvements: 1) cognitive strategies, which allow learners to interact and manipulate what is to be learnt; 2) metacognitive strategies, which can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate learning tasks; and 3) social-affective strategies, which involves students interacting with other people or using affective control to assist learning.

1.3.2.16 Cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is based on the principle that "learning grows primarily out of peer interaction rather than in the adult-child relationship of the traditional classroom" (Johnson, 1980 –cited Crawford-Lange, 1987:138). In other methods, a student's success does not entail the success of other students but, in this method, the possibility of achieving a goal is increased as other students are successful at achieving the goal.

Larsen-Freeman (2002) observed a classroom where this method was put into practice and came up with a series of principles. In this method, for example, students should not think competitively and individualistically, but work cooperatively and share their triumphs with others (your triumph, my triumph). For that reason, they have to work in groups that stay together for a period of time so that they can create good group dynamics. Members of the group, who interact in the target language, must all feel some kind of responsibility, something which makes participation essential –even for shy or not-so-talkative students. Meanwhile, the teacher must provide students with several social skills, such as acknowledging everyone's contributions, keeping the conversation calm or encouraging/asking others to contribute.

Crawford-Lange (1987) also believes that it is very important to create a cooperative atmosphere in the classroom, something which can be achieved through a physical reorganization of the classroom so that students can sit in groups, through the assignment of different responsibilities to different students within a group, through devising joint learning activities or through grading students on a mutual basis (taking into account the group performance in individual marks or just providing group marks).

Walters (2000), however, introduced some criticism to this method. She believed, for instance, that cooperative learning could go wrong if one of the students of the group did all the work while the other watched, something which forced teachers to come up with strategies to make sure all students in the group had participated. Another problem with this method is the fact that it had been interpreted differently and, therefore, performed in different ways –i.e. some teachers believe that it entails giving different responsibilities while others think that it just meant to do any kind of group work, such as classroom discussion. "While researchers agree on the key components of successful cooperative learning, these components are not always understood or used by teachers" (Walters, 2000:3). Finally, another possible criticism that it could be made to this method is the fact that it benefits some students over others –i.e. advocates for gifted students worry that bright students will be held back by the limits of the

group. However, most studies on the field seem to prove that this method is beneficial for all students (Walters, 2000).

1.4 Materials

1.4.1 Types

According to Alwright (1981 –cited in Hutchinson and Torres, 1994), the key elements that interact in the language classroom are the teacher, the students and the materials used. In our previous chapter we were able to observe how the teacher and the learner influenced the language learning process analysing their decisions –i.e. regarding the methods to be used or the roles and approaches in the classroom– or their personalities –i.e. individual learner differences, motivation, or relationship established between the teacher and the students among other things. The only thing that we need to further analyse in other to close up this model would be the materials to be used in the classroom which, in turn, is the element that is more easily controllable across different contexts. Teachers and students may be different in each context, so it is difficult to come up with generalizations on how to improve education when they are involved. However, if we focus on the effect of certain materials on the learning process, we can obtain conclusions which could be easily tested on other groups to see their generalizability.

In order to provide readers with a comprehensive point of view on materials and resources used in the language classroom, we will here summarize the three main types that we can observe in language classrooms around the world in the 21st Century: textbook materials, authentic materials and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

1.4.1.1 Textbook materials

Textbooks have been the most common reference materials used in the language classroom for a long time now. Hutchinson and Torres (1994), indeed, claim that “the textbook is an almost universal element of ELT teaching” and it seems that “no teaching-learning situation is complete until it has its relevant textbook” (p.135). Nevertheless, not everyone sees them as the best resource for language learning and their effectiveness has become a recurrent topic of discussion among experts on the field.

On the one hand, some authors have tried to emphasize the positive aspects of using textbooks in the language classroom. Richards (1998 –cited in Hall, 2011), for instance, stated

that textbooks were the primary source of teaching ideas and materials for many teachers around the world, something which could be explained given the fact that they are not only a source of interesting and motivating materials organized in a logical manner (Hall, 2011), but also a reliable representation of the syllabus which can guide inexperienced teachers when deciding what to teach at each level/age –it allows teachers to know which standards they should follow and what content they are expected to teach if they aim at standardization (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Textbooks also help teachers by fostering confidence and security and by reducing the time of lesson preparation –textbooks "save time, give direction to lessons, guide discussion, facilitate giving homework" (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994:318). Furthermore, textbooks provide the lesson with a certain structure, which routinizes the development of the classroom and which allows learners to have a clear idea of what happens when (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Hall (2011) also praised textbooks arguing that they provided students with valuable language input and exposure which, moreover, could be always accessible. They provide a written record of what has been studied and serve as "frameworks" or "guides" for students, helping them organize their learning inside and outside the classroom (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Textbooks are also believed to be reliable materials (Sheldon, 1988), as they were designed by people who combine different areas of expertise (Hall, 2011) and allow negotiation between experts, who decide which things could be more or less interesting for a given course (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Moreover, according to these authors, textbooks may serve to represent the interests of other institutions beyond the teacher and the student –i.e. the government, the school, students' parents and so on. That way, it can be assured that they have some kind of influence on the content, methodology and cultural/ideological values of the lesson (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Finally, the latest authors not only praise the positive aspects of textbooks as they are conceived nowadays, but they also propose them as potential agents of change in order to adapt to the new models of education of our times. Hutchison and Torres (1994), for example, believe that learners can only process a certain amount of change at a time, something to which textbooks can perfectly adapt, as they are able to introduce changes gradually. Moreover, textbooks take a burden away from teachers, allowing them to eventually implement a more creative methodology and to design more useful material adaptions and supplementations. It must also be remarked that when trying to introduce change, people need to see a complete picture where it is shown how change will look like –and this is something textbooks can do too. Finally, the authors believe that people assimilate things better when working as part of a group so, the fact that textbooks get the support of the school and the teaching community make teachers feel they are not alone when introducing changes. For all the reasons above stated, Hutchinson and Torres (1994) reassert themselves by saying that

"only the textbook can really provide the level of structure that appears to be necessary for teachers to fully understand and 'routinize' change" (p.323).

On the other hand, textbooks have been long criticized by ELT experts and teachers, since an excessive use of them has been observed to be detrimental for learners' development. Hall (2011), for example, stated that since teachers relied so much on textbooks, it was easy that they entered a dependency culture, drifting all the responsibility towards textbooks. This could make teachers become "de-skilled" in turn, since they would lose their ability to think critically and work independently (Richards, 1998 –cited in Hall, 2011).

> The danger of ready-made textbooks is that they can seem to absolve teachers of responsibility. Instead of participating in the day-to-day decisions that have to be made about what to teach and how to teach it, it is easy to sit back and operate the system, secure in the knowledge that the wise and virtuous people who produced the textbook knew what was good for us.
> (Swan, 1992: para. 5)

Another point of controversy is the recurrently mentioned "quality of excellence, validity and authority" of textbooks, which is used as a weapon against teacher-generated materials –they have less credibility in comparison (Sheldon, 1988)¬–, and which may not be as true as it is made to believe (Hall, 2011). On the contrary, maybe the teacher knows the reality of the classroom better and is able to provide students with more appropriate resources whose validity could be tested through research. Another problem of textbooks is that they are considered quite conservative and traditional: on the one hand they tend to introduce traditional topics that do not manage to engage students (i.e. sports, pop-music) while avoiding controversial but more interesting ones (Hall, 2011; Swan, 1992); and, on the other hand, they tend to be a little bit outdated regarding methodological advances in the field (Sheldon, 1988) and regarding students' everyday needs and interests (Hall, 2011) –there are long delays between the writing and the publication of a textbook and it is very difficult that textbooks are able to present the newest thing. However, the fact that textbooks do not manage to cope with students' needs and interests may not only have to do with this: it may also have to do with the fact that it is very complicated to adapt materials to a great myriad of contexts (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994).

Some other authors have also criticized textbooks because they consider them poor representatives of cultural values. Gray (2000), for instance, carried out a study on how teachers dealt with cultural content that appeared on textbooks and realized that one of the main sources of problems for the teacher were the recurrent "stereotypical representations" that appeared on these materials, something which made them either drop or adapt such

materials. Ndura (2004), on the other hand, tried to evaluate a series of textbooks in order to extract the cultural biases that they contained and in order to analyse the effect of such biases on the students' acculturation process. After revising some relevant literature and revising six different ESL textbook, the author came to the conclusion that the main biases found in textbooks were stereotypes –i.e. sexist and xenophobic–, invisibility –"omission of information regarding any of the main variables that make up our individual and collective cultural identity and of the influence that they exert on our everyday life" (p.147)–, and unreality –i.e. avoidance of controversial issues such as intolerance, discrimination, racism and so on. Taking this into account, the author stated that these biases were extremely dangerous, as they could affect students' world views and they could hinder students' readiness to confront real-life situations.

Finally, criticism also related to the type of language these materials offer, which is qualified as "artificial" and "unrealistic". Gilmore (2004), for instance, conducted a study to compare the type of interactions that one could find in textbooks and in real-life situations. The study focused in "service encounters" –someone requesting information from another person–, trying to analyse how six different textbooks dealt with them and trying to replicate them in real-life conversations. Once this was done, the author was able to compare both types of encounters and to draw several conclusions. First of all, he concluded that authentic conversations were twice as long as textbook conversations, since real-life conversations had a much more complex structure.

> The language of some course books represents a "can do" society, in which interaction is generally smooth and problem free, the speakers cooperate with each other politely, the conversation is neat, tidy and predictable… the questions and answers are sequenced rather in the manner of a quiz show or court-room interrogation.
> (Carter 1998:47 –cited in Gilmore, 2004)

The problem with textbooks presenting such simple exchanges is that they underestimate the ability of learners to cope with authentic materials and isolate the information required, preventing them from developing the skills they need to do it –i.e. bottom-up processing skills.

On the other hand, Gilmore (2004) realized that textbook conversations contained a higher lexical density, which also had some detrimental effects on students' performance –such an abundance of content words was not only negative because it made texts more difficult (i.e. higher vocabulary load, which most of times represented infrequent vocabulary), but also because it minimized the appearance of common oral devices typical of authentic conversations (i.e. false starts, repetitions, overlapping, hesitation devices and so on). As a result, if students only have access to textbook interactions, they may get the wrong impression

that spoken discourse should be neat and tidy, which is an unattainable model and which does not prepare students to face real-life encounters. Later on, Gilmore (2007) carried out a more extensive study on the use of authentic materials and was able to point out some other relevant problems of the language presented in textbook materials: textbooks focused on the linguistic competence rather than on the sociolinguistic competence, so they did not teach key elements in everyday language, such as idioms or collocations; they failed to appropriately present genres or functional elements of language such as speech acts, since they relied on institutions about language rather than on empirical data (i.e. language corpora); and they focused on isolated items rather than on complete discourse, something which hindered students from creating unified, cohesive and coherent spoken and written texts.

After revising the pros and cons of textbook materials, it seems that their negative aspects prevail over their positive aspects. “The whole business of the management of language learning is far too complex to be satisfactorily catered for by a pre-packaged set of decisions embodied in teaching materials” (Alwright 1981:9 –cited in Sheldon, 1988). However, it seems that the lack of time and the restrictive nature of most teaching situations force teachers to end up relying on textbooks. Sheldon (1988) thinks that the only solution is to comply with this imposition and to try to select the best textbook possible. For that reason, and given the lack of reviews existent at the time, he decided to propose a list of criteria to evaluate textbooks based on common-core factors shared by reviewers, administrators, teachers, learners and educational advisers.

> It is clear that course book assessment is fundamentally a subjective, rule-of-thumb activity, and that no neat formula, grid, or system will ever provide a definitive yardstick. But at the least, perhaps the use of similar evaluative parameters will help to make it, when time and circumstances allow, a more coherent, thoughtful enterprise than it often is at present.
> (Sheldon, 1988:245)

On the other hand, some other authors proposed not only to adapt and modify textbook materials so that they could match the classroom’s needs (Gray, 2000; Hutchinson and Torres, 1994; Swan, 1992), but also to combine the use of textbooks with the use of other resources based on authentic materials and ICTs to create tailor-made lessons. This is what we will revise in the following sections.

1.4.1.2 Authentic materials

We have previously seen how textbook materials present many negative aspects when used as the only resource in the language classroom. The question is then, are authentic

materials the solution to this problem? Many scholars have worked on the implementation of authentic materials in the classroom to see their effects and, as we will see, they have discovered that their use is linked to many positive outcomes.

Nevertheless, the first thing we need to do is to properly define the concept of authenticity in order to know what this concept really entails. Gilmore (2007) has proposed a series of possible definitions of authenticity:

- Authenticity entails the language produced by native speakers for native speakers in a particular language community (Porter and Roberts 1981; Little, Devitt and Singleton 1989);
- Authenticity refers to the language produced by a real speaker/writer for a real audience, conveying a real message (Morrow 1977; Porter and Roberts 1981; Swaffar 1985; Nunan 1988/9; Benson and Voller 1997);
- 'An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort' (Morrow, 1977:13).

However, the concept of authenticity seems to go beyond a type of language, text or material –it may also refer to context or task authenticity. Gilmore (2007), for instance, believed that authenticity involved learners carrying out a task in a context which was as authentic as possible –or which at least was able to be recreated–, as only in this way students would be prepared to face real-life situations that they would be likely to encounter in the future. On the other hand, Guariento and Morley (2001) argued that authenticity was not only a matter of using authentic materials, but also of proposing authentic tasks. On that basis, these authors proposed to foster authenticity in four different ways: 1) through establishing a genuine aim/purpose –i.e. using the language to actually do something with it, establishing a real communication–; 2) through establishing real world targets –i.e. tasks should address students' real needs, such as buying a ticket, renting an apartment or taking lecture notes–; 3) through classroom interaction –i.e. students negotiate with the teacher tasks and materials and discuss about their needs, interests and preferred ways of working–; and 4) through engagement –i.e. students need to be genuinely interested in the topic and purpose of the task in order to understand its relevance. Finally, White (2006) talked about four different types of authenticity: 1) task authenticity, which refers to tasks that are similar to those that students will carry out in their real life; 2) teacher authenticity, which could be defined as the degree to which teachers can make a task more or less authentic through their interfering or involvement in the task; 3) learner authenticity, which entails learners being interested and engaged in a given task or

course; and 4) classroom authenticity, which means using the classroom reality to create learning opportunities.

Now that we are aware of the complexity of this concept, we can analyse the effect of authentic resources (in whatever way they may manifest their authenticity) on the language learning field. Some authors, for example, have tried to see their connection with motivation as we previously saw on the chapter about motivation –authentic resources are supposed to be more interesting and stimulating than artificial or non-authentic resources because of their intent to communicate a message rather than to highlight the target language (Swaffar 1985; Freeman and Holden 1986; Hutchinson and Waters 1987; Little, Devitt and Singleton 1989; King 1990; Little and Singleton 1991 –all of them cited in Peacock, 1997). Peacock (1997) is one of them, as he carried out a study to measure the effect of materials on the motivation of learners. In order to do so, he analysed two different classes using artificial and authentic materials and collected data on their on-task behaviour, on their observed overall class motivation and on their self-reported motivation. These observations made him realize that the use of authentic materials increased learners' concentration and involvement, but in order that it affected motivation, the right authentic tasks should be selected –not all tasks fostered students' motivation just because they contained authentic materials. In the same line, Gilmore (2007) stated that the success of any particular set of authentic materials in motivating a specific group of learners would depend on how appropriate they were for the subjects in question, how they were exploited in the class and how effectively the teacher was able to mediate between the materials and the students, amongst other variables. Furthermore, he also mentioned the importance of the familiarity of students with authentic materials, or the length of time over which motivation was measured, since these elements could influence results in this kind of studies. Other scholars, on the other hand, believed that all kind of authentic resources were motivating per se for a number of reasons –i.e. because they brought learners closer to the target culture (Little, Devitt and Singleton, 1989 –cited in Peacock, 1997), because when learners were able to cope with them they could experience a feeling of achievement (Cross, 1984 –cited in Peacock, 1997), or because they could be used from different points of view, adapting them to classroom needs (Sherman, 2003).

Some other authors have tried to observe the effect of authentic resources on language acquisition. Gilmore (2007), for instance, believed that authentic materials were likely to expose learners to a wider variety of grammatical and lexical features and that, even if they did with less frequency than contrived input, this could result in students gaining higher language proficiency. Hwang (2005), on the other hand, cited Shrum and Glisa (1994) to state that empirical studies had confirmed the positive results achieved by listeners and readers who

were given the chance to interact with authentic oral or written texts. In addition, she claimed that the use of authentic materials was also in tune with "the natural communication task" – defined by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) as a task "where the focus of the student is on communicating an idea or opinion to someone rather than on the language forms" (p. 247)–, which was the initial step of the process of natural language acquisition (similar to Krashen's concept of "acquisition"). Finally, Guariento and Morley (2001) hypothesized that if students were exposed to the language of the real world, they would be able to acquire skills and strategies of the real world and thus they would be ready to participate in real world events – and not only classroom activities. Furthermore, we can also find some other authors who studied the effect of certain specific authentic resources on language acquisition. This is the case of Burt (1999), who analysed the difference between offering students authentic and instructional videos, and who came to the conclusion that the use of authentic videos was beneficial because they managed to present real language spoken at a normal speed with genuine accents, because they provided a realistic view on English-speaking countries and because they were attractive and motivating. Bacon (1992), on the other hand, conducted a study to see how learners comprehended and learnt from authentic aural input and he concluded that learners always made the most of these authentic texts, even if they were way beyond their level, because they managed to develop and use different strategies.

Nevertheless, the use of authentic resources is also associated to a great myriad of challenges. Widdowson (1998), for example, argued that language presented to students in the classroom could not be authentic because the classroom could not provide the contextual conditions for it to be authenticated by learners. He believed that a textual product could only be made pragmatically real as discourse if it was reconnected to its context, and students' only available context was that of the classroom, which was entirely different to that which gave rise to the language in the first place. Burt (1999) also pointed out several challenges associated to the use of authentic videos, such as the fact that they did not provide the best mean to explain complex concepts or to practice particular grammar or writing skills (Johnston, 1999), the fact that they took a long time to prepare, or the fact that they could contain language, content or topics which were controversial or inappropriate. However, the most recurrent problem associated to the use of authentic materials is that of task difficulty (Lund, 1990; Guariento and Morley, 2001; Gilmore, 2007; Robin, 2007), something which could be fatal as it may demotivate learners (Williams 1983; Freeman and Holden 1986; Prodromou 1996; Widdowson 1996 –all cited in Peacock, 1997).

The question now is: how could we cope with such challenges? Some authors believe that the best way to deal with them is to adapt materials so that they can better cope with our

particular context. Darian (2001) proposed the adaptation of materials in four different levels: semantic –in order to avoid connotation–, lexical –to control the appearance of infrequent used words, arbitrary collocations, idioms, and complicated and ambiguous verbs–, syntactic –to control punctuation, elliptical forms, structural complexity and structures of modification–, and discourse –including certain elements to make reading easier or harder for the language learner (i.e. pro forms, redundancy, emphasis, implicitness/explicitness and so on). Gilmore (2007) also made some positive comments on the effect of text modification, since he believed that it was part of the nature of the classroom genre –teachers naturally clarify, rephrase, and make connections explicit to mediate between the materials and learners, and learners naturally negotiate meaning between themselves in order to comprehend input (Hammond and Gibbons, 2005 –cited in Gilmore, 2007). However, the majority of authors revised agree that the best thing we can do is to focus on how we can use a resource rather than when –it is important to carefully select materials in order that they can perfectly fit a particular classroom context. Lund (1990), who worked on a taxonomy of listening tasks for the language classroom, stated that all texts could be virtually used for all levels as long as we designed an appropriate task for them –"difficulty should be considered an attribute of tasks rather than texts" (p.113). Gilmore (2007) also believed that the key resided in presenting such resources with suitable tasks for a given group of learners, since rating the difficulty of a text could be quite hard –i.e. we must pay attention to many different elements, such as content, genres, delivery speed and accents used, visual support, or text length. In the same line, Guariento and Morley (2001), who gave great relevance to task authenticity, also agreed that difficult authentic texts could be presented to all kind of learners if they were accompanied by simple tasks, which, in the same token, were as authentic as other more complicated tasks. Finally, Robin (2007) not only believed on the efficiency of wraparound exercises to make a text more accessible to all kind of learners, but he also proposed offering them certain aid options –i.e. repetition options, slowed audio text delivery or accompanying text (for aural/audiovisual texts), translations, interactive practice that allows negotiation of meaning and so on.

1.4.1.3 Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

Another possible alternative to the exclusive use of textbook materials in the classroom is the use of ICTs, which can be used as a resource in very different ways. The use of ICTs in the classroom has in fact evolved a lot, not only because such technologies are constantly developing, but also because their availability in the classroom and their potential applications for language teaching have also changed a great deal over the past years. The question now is: can we use ICTs efficiently in the classroom? What are the potential benefits of using these materials?

A very complete review of the history of technology and language learning that is worth revisiting is that of Warschauer and Meskill (2000), which analysed the different uses of ICTs according to the different methods that aroused over the last years. According to these authors, the first "technologies" which were used in the classroom were those implemented by the grammar-translation method –namely the overhead projector and, in some cases, early computer software of "drill-and-practice". Meanwhile, the audiolingual method introduced the use of the audiotape to perform repetition drills. However, it was not until the appearance of the Communicative Language Teaching Approach that more advanced ICTs started to be widely used in the classroom. Within this method, some technologies managed to match the cognitive approach principles –i.e. allow learners to be exposed to language in meaningful context–, such as the text-reconstruction software, the concordance software or the multimedia simulation software. Nevertheless, the greatest revolution aroused in relation to the socio-cognitive approaches, according which learning a language is seen as a process of socialization into particular discourse communities. In this respect, ICTs were able to offer students something that was quite difficult to find before: access to authentic tasks and to authentic contact not only with other language learners, but also with NSs of the target language. Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) was, according to these authors, one of the most relevant contributions of ICTs to the language classroom. CMC tools included all types of synchronous and asynchronous tools for communication –i.e. email, chat, forums, audio-conference software and so on–, and they could be used to promote a different type of exchanges within the classroom –i.e. students could use CMC software to carry out discussions in and out of the classroom–, and long distance exchanges. Finally, Warschauer and Meskill (2000) also mentioned the possibility of accessing resources and publishing on the Internet, which could also offer a myriad of opportunities for the language classroom –i.e. web pages as authentic materials, web pages as resources to gather material for class projects, the Internet to host students' published work, or the Internet as a vehicle to participate in international projects.

Some other authors also revised the history of ICTs and language learning and analysed the different resources that have been used in the language classroom over the past years. That is the case of Jarvis (2005), who differentiated two stages in the development of ICT resources in the classroom: 1) the pre-Internet era, where Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) dominated the scene and where corpus linguistics and statistical analysis of the language were key to better know how the language worked and how we could teach it; and 2) the Internet era, where the Internet not only became a source in itself, but also a changing force that affected the language. Hamilton (2009) also conducted a brief revision of

the changes and improvements on ICT tools. In this revision, she claimed that we had moved from more static ICT tools –i.e. CD-ROMs and word-processors– to other more interactive models of ICTs –i.e. a more extensive use if the Internet as a source for tailor-made materials, extended range of electronic communicative possibilities, creation of online platforms with all type of pedagogical options included and so on. On the other hand, Warschauer and Healey (1998) provided another overview on computers and language learning, focusing on CALL technologies and the Internet too. These authors differentiated three main stages in the use of computers in the classroom: 1) behaviouristic CALL, which was popular in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and which mainly consisted in using the computer as a personal tutor in the performance of repetitive language drills; 2) communicative CALL, which was popular in the late 1970s and in the early 1980s and which focused not so much on what students did with the machine, but rather on what they discussed among them while using it; and 3) integrative CALL, which was popular in the late 1980s and in the early 1990s and which started focusing on language use in authentic social contexts using the four language skills:

> In integrative approaches, students learn to use a variety of technological tools as an ongoing process of language learning and use, rather than visiting the computer lab on a once a week basis for isolated exercises.
> (Warschauer and Healey, 1998, para. 6)

After carrying out this historical revision, Warschauer and Healey (1998) analysed how the situation was at the time the paper was written, a time where CALL software and the Internet –in the form of CMC and an extensive use of Internet resources– dominated the picture. Finally, they hypothesized about the future of CALL, which included the development of electronic literacies in the classroom –i.e. finding, evaluating and critically interpreting net-based information–, or the use of intelligent CALL –i.e. software that can offer meaningful guidance and feedback, comprehensible information in multiple media, and ways to communicate with the computer. Meanwhile, the work of Levy (2009) proposed a comprehensive list of existing technologies that we could use in the language classroom in order to develop the different areas of language learning:

- Vocabulary: in order to develop vocabulary, Levy proposed the use of courseware, online activities, online dictionaries, corpora and CMC technologies for instance.
- Reading: the author stated that CALL technologies could be used for the development of reading skills in the form of electronic dictionaries, software that produces textual, contextual and multimedia annotations, computer-based training programs, or web-based activities.

- Writing: Levy recognized that word processors had become essential for writing. However, he believed that they were not the only technology that could enhance the development of this skill, as blogs, emails, PowerPoint presentations, chats or wikis had also done a lot in this respect.
- Pronunciation: Levy revised the development of specific pronunciation software.
- Listening: the author mentioned a series of recent technologies that could be used for the development of listening skills, such as digitalized audio and video, streaming audio and video, podcasts and webcasts, as well as the more "traditional" CDs and DVDs, and he also mentioned the possibility of using CALL technologies to allow the learner to access authentic speech and to control it in different ways –i.e. through segmentation, repetition, speed regulation, inclusion of aid options and so on.
- Speaking: according the author, ICTs could be used in very different ways to develop oral production skills –i.e. via applications that enable the computer to transmit audio or video through audio or video conferencing, via applications to facilitate user participation and interaction through text chat, voice chat, audioblogs, or voiced bulletin boards, or via applications that use speech recognition and synthesis technologies.
- Culture: new technologies helped students learn more about other cultures because, according to Levy, students could access authentic materials online that were initially aimed at NSs, students could participate in CMC and telecollaboration, and students could enter virtual worlds where they were in touch with participants from all over the world.

Mitchell (2009), on the other hand, focused on the potential of the Internet as a language learning tool and analysed all the possible ways in which Internet material could be exploited in the language classroom. Regarding news websites, for instance, he proposed using them as a source of preparation for teachers or a source of activities for students –either using texts for comprehension or vocabulary activities, or using the audio files to develop students' oral skills. He also proposed exploiting commercial websites to create quick starter activities or problem-solving projects, as well as exploiting websites for young people so that leaners could engage in communication exchanges thanks to them. Moreover, he suggested using culturally authentic sites so that learners could learn more about the target culture. Meanwhile, Godwin-Jones (2003) tried to differentiate the two types of tools that were linked to the use of the Internet: tools of the first generation web (or tools of the web 1.0) and tools of the second generation web (or tools of the web 2.0). Tools of the web 1.0 were those that we traditionally associated to CMC and were divided into asynchronous tools –i.e. emails, discussion forums, learning management systems (LMSs) and online forums aimed at NSs–, and synchronous tools, such as chats and audio-conferencing software. On the other hand, tools of the web 2.0

included some other more collaborative resources such as blogs, RSSs –Really Simple Syndication, a system to frequently update people who subscribe to the blog/podcast– and wikis. Duffy and Burns (2006) and McLoughin and Lee (2007) further analysed the use of web 2.0 resources, whose potential was linked to their ability to address the needs of our diverse students through customization, personalization and rich opportunities for networking and collaboration (Bryant, 2006 –cited in McLoughin and Lee, 2007). From these two, it was particularly interesting the review provided by Duffy and Burns (2006), where these authors not only explained how blogs, wikis and RSSs work, but also provided a list of potential uses and the potential benefits of these resources. Finally, we have also reviewed the work of Blyth (2006), where he suggested that the best transition from textbooks to online materials was the implementation of open-educational publishing projects using all kind of multimedia components.

Now that we have revised all the types of ICTs that have been used so far as well as their potential uses, the question that remains is: is it worth using them in the language classroom? Are they actually effective? Regarding the first question, Warschauer and Meskill (2000) concluded that, since ICTs had become one of the main media of communication, the debate of using or not using technologies was not an issue anymore –teachers had to deal with this reality in the best possible way. Nevertheless, these authors also assumed that the use ICTs also came with some downsides: it could entail some start-up expenses, it could be time-consuming (especially at the beginning), and it could lead to wrong practices if not paired with effective language teaching approaches (see also Mitchell, 2009). In order to counteract the negative aspects of using ICTs in the classroom, Warschauer and Whittaker (1997) proposed a series of guidelines for teachers, which included the following recommendations: 1) considering carefully one's goals, since presenting random online activities may not have any value; 2) aiming at the integration of ICTs in the class' routine; 3) taking into account all the possible problems which may arise –i.e. technical difficulties; 4) being ready to provide all the necessary support to cope with those expected difficulties; or 5) taking into account students' opinions in order to enforce a learner-centred approach, which, in turn, does not mean to adopt a passive role.

This leads us to the second question, that of efficiency. As we have seen so far, there are a lot of studies which hypothesize about the potential uses of ICTs in the classroom but not so many which actually prove their efficiency. Zhao (2003) tried to explain this by stating that it is hard to assess the effectiveness of technology –i.e. ICTs include a wide range of tools and materials, which makes it difficult to generalize–, or that the effectivity of a given tool depends on its use and also on other external factors, such as the learner, the task, the instructional

setting or the assessment tool (see also Evans [2009] on the effect of government policies on the use of ICTs and Fisher [2009] on the effect of teacher's perceptions on the same issue). However, and taking all this into account, he tried to analyse the effectiveness of certain technology uses (and not technology per se) by conducting a meta-analysis of several studies in the field. After doing so, he concluded that the use of technology was beneficial for language learning because: 1) it provided access to linguistic and cultural materials, enhancing access efficiency, authenticity and comprehensibility; 2) it provided opportunities for communication (i.e. interactions with the computer, or with remote audiences through the computer); and 3) it provided feedback through computer-based grammar checkers, automatic speech recognition technology, or the tracking and analysing of student errors and behaviours. In the same line, Warschauer and Meskill's (2000) case studies also proved that a rational use of ICTs could have a lot of benefits for language learning:

> Computer technology is not a panacea for language teaching; using it demands substantial commitments of time and money and brings no guaranteed results. Yet, when appropriately implemented, new technologies provide the means to help reshape both the content and processes of language education (p.14).

Meanwhile, Young (2003) studied the advantages and disadvantages of integrating ICTs in language classrooms and, after collecting information from authentic email messages sent by students, students' logs, questionnaires, observations, and formal and informal interviews, he concluded that their use was extremely beneficial: first of all, ICTs were considered an interesting and useful tool which enabled students to access authentic materials, or to make foreign friends; secondly, ICTs were proved to influence language learning in a positive way; and finally, ICTs were considered motivating and were believed to provide a less threatening/stressful environment for students, something which allowed them to be more engaged and confident. Mondahl, Rasmussen and Razmenta (2009), on the other hand, worked with two groups of EFL students completing a series of assignments using ICTs and using traditional materials. After comparing the results of the group using ICTs and the group not using them, these authors concluded that ICTs led students to reflect more on their information and work processes, motivated both teachers and students, and resulted in more optimistic learning outcomes.

Something which deserves further consideration is the connection between ICTs and motivation because, even if it was briefly mentioned before, it has not been fully developed. In fact, even if motivation has been mentioned in several studies as one of the factors that consolidate the efficiency of ICTs, it has also been the subject of study of a series of papers. This is the case in Genc Ilter's (2009) work, where the author tried to find out the role of

technology on the motivation of EFL learners. In order to do so, he distributed a questionnaire to a group of 350 students where they could find 15 questions about motivation and technology. After analysing the results of these questionnaires, he came to the conclusion that there was a close relationship between language-learning motivational factors and using technology: “it can be said that the use of technology in EFL classrooms provides meaningful and interesting process in language learning and students can be more motivated with this technological development in EFL classrooms” (Genc Ilter, 2009: para. 97). Nevertheless, it must be also pointed out that he did not find a relationship between the use of technology and a potential language improvement. Another example is that of Warschauer (1996b), who focused on two aspects of CALL (writing and communicating with computers) and tried to see their effect on motivation. His study also relied on a questionnaire which collected information about students’ use of these technologies and students’ feelings about using them. The findings of this study were quite positive, as it showed that writing and communicating with computers fostered four crucial elements of motivation on students: 1) communication – students could feel part of a community, learn about different people and cultures and learn about each other; 2) empowerment –enhancing personal power, overcoming isolation, or making it less threatening to contact people; 3) learning, which could be done in a more effective and independent way; and 4) achievement –students were able to perceive it and thus felt an intrinsic satisfaction.

1.4.2 General criteria to select materials and design activities

As it has been previously mentioned, it is not only the type of materials that we use in the classroom what is important. It is also crucial to carefully select such materials and to carefully design the activities that will accompany them. For that reason, we will devote this section to such topic, revising what experts in the field have said about it and their recommendations.

However, the first thing that we will do is to learn more about what “materials development” involves. According to Brian Tomlison (2001), “materials development” is not only a field which studies the principles and procedures of the design, implementation and evaluation of language teaching materials, but also a practice that involves the production, evaluation and adaption of language teaching materials. The history of this area of study is quite recent, since in the past nobody considered it a separate field which may deserve the attention of scholars, as it was believed to be a sub-section of methodology. Nevertheless, in the 1980s and especially in the 1990s it started to get more prominence, as experts realized that textbook materials were not able to cope with all the different classroom contexts. Moreover, it was discovered that providing teachers with the experience of developing materials was a very

effective way of helping teachers to understand and apply theories of language learning. Nowadays, most research focuses on materials evaluation, an area that is not only quite limited, as it only pays attention to one part of the process, but also quite subjective –i.e. the views of the researcher usually determine what is measured and what is valued, the sets of criteria proposed tend not to fit all types of materials and so on. For that reason, we will try to offer a more comprehensive approach that also takes into account the different ways of developing materials for the classroom, firstly regarding their selection, and secondly regarding the design of accompanying activities.

In that respect, Hall (2011) offered a very interesting guide on how to construct a syllabus, in which he differentiated three different stages: 1) defining content; 2) organizing, sequencing and grading materials and activities; and 3) adapting them to a given methodology. Regarding content, Nunan (1988) proposed to follow certain steps in order to select it. First, he believed that the objectives of the course should be specified, either in an implicit or in an explicit way. However, it must be said that making course objectives explicit may be more beneficial, as it may help learners be more aware of their role as learners and as it may make them feel more involved in the classroom's decisions among other things. Such objectives would need to include task statements –i.e. what the learner is required to do–, conditions statement –i.e. conditions under which the task will be performed–, and standards statement –standards to be achieved. Secondly, Nunan (1988) suggested selecting the input that would be provided for students. In teacher-centred approaches, input was traditionally selected on the basis of linguistic content or function analysis, but in the learner-centred classroom input should be derived from learners' needs and it should be divided according to very different criteria: structures, functions and notions, situations, genre and text-type, processes and procedures, and language skills (Hall, 2011).

As far as organization, sequencing and grading are concerned, Hall (2011) specified certain criteria that should be observed in order to organize a syllabus. The main element that should be taken into account is that of content difficulty, which was traditionally measured in linguistic terms –i.e. complexity of the grammar constructions provided, length of texts, propositional density, speed of delivery in oral texts and so on–, but which can be also measured from other points of views. Nunan (1989), for instance, also took into account the learner factors, a concept with which he referred to the strategies that learners used when trying to understand and use the language. These factors relied on how learners used their background knowledge to understand a given task, on their confidence, on their motivation, on their learning pace, on their observed ability in language skills and their actual linguistic knowledge, and on their cultural awareness. Furthermore, Nunan (1989) also considered the

activity factors, which referred to the difficulty of the activities associated to a given material/input. This subcomponent of task difficulty has been revised by several authors, each of which has proposed a different list of elements which supposedly determine the complexity of a given activity. Brindley (1987 –cited in Nunan, 1989), for instance, believed that the following elements should be considered: 1) the relevance of the task; 2) the complexity of the instructions and content, as well as the demands it put on learners; 3) the amount of context provided prior to the task; 4) the help available –i.e. teacher, books, or other learners–, 5) the degree of grammatical accuracy and contextual appropriacy expected; and 6) the time available to carry out the task. Prabhu (1987 –cited in Nunan, 1989), on the other hand, stated that task difficulty depended on the information provided –i.e. types and amount–, the reasoning needed –i.e. number of steps or cognitive operations–, the precision needed, the familiarity with constraints, and the degree of abstractness. Candlin and Nunan (1897 –cited in Nunan, 1989) considered that difficulty should be measured based on the cognitive demands that tasks made to learners –i.e. ability to notice what kind of input or experience they are confronted with, ability to make sense of the input as a particular example of language, ability to go beyond the information given, or ability to extrapolate from texts of the same type/genre/purpose. In the same line, Candlin (1987 –cited in Nunan, 1989) also believed that difficulty should be measured according to the cognitive operations that the learner had to perform while completing the task –i.e. cognitive load, communicative stress, particularity and generalizability of the task, code complexity and interpretative density, or process continuity (ability to know what is necessary to move to a new level).

Some other criteria that could be used in order to organize, sequence and grade materials and activities are that of usefulness (or urgency), which entails covering learners' immediate needs first –i.e. in ESL contexts, students may need to learn certain things first in order to deal with their daily activities–, that of frequency –i.e. introducing first the most recurring language–, or that of tradition –i.e. learners and teachers tend to expect content to appear in a specific way. In this respect, it is interesting to point out that syllabuses tend to be organized linearly, but that they could also be presented cyclically –i.e. learners return to the same content over and over, deepening in it more and more every time.

Finally, Hall (2011) also reminded us that every syllabus is designed to fulfil a given methodology, so that is something that needs to be taken into account –methods can shape many aspects of how materials should be selected, presented and performed.

2 HOW TO IMPROVE ORAL SKILLS

2.1 Limitations of the Spanish language teaching system

The rationale of this dissertation is closely linked to this chapter, as we decided to make a contribution to the field of language learning in Spain based on the hypothesis that Spanish learners underperformed in this area, especially when compared to other European counterparts. There is a general belief in Spain that our approach to language learning is somewhat misconceived, as results tend not to be the ones expected even after implementing a wide variety of measures for this purpose. For that reason, in this chapter we will try to see how true this hypothesis is, where the problem lies and how we could try to change things to discard it.

In order to understand a little bit better the situation of language learning in Spain, we must resort to Morales Gálvez et al. (2000), who provide us with a very comprehensive picture of the field in Europe. First of all, Morales Gálvez et al. (2000) revised the history of language learning in Europe, analysing when foreign languages were firstly introduced or what their objectives or contents were. Then, they summarized several studies which revolved around students' level across Europe, comparing the performance of learners from one country to the other. From these studies, particularly interesting was that of Gil (1997), who compared the EFL skills of 15-16-year-old students in Spain, France and Sweden and which concluded that Swedish students had a higher level of proficiency in English than Spanish and French students.

Comajoan (2010) tried to analyse the situation of language teaching in Spain too, although in his case he was also very interested in observing the influence of the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). In this study, the author pointed out that there was a traditionally low level of proficiency in English among pre-university and higher education students in Spain, citing studies like that of the Consell Superior –which found out that 4th of ESO Catalan students' score in an English test was not very high, even after studying the language for eight years–, that of Berga et al. (2008) –which concluded that at the end of secondary education, students did only achieve an A2-B1 level, a similar level to that achieved in countries like France, Italy or Germany but far from that of countries like Finland–, or the Eurobarometer 243 (Commission of the European Communities) –which stated that Spain was on the 5th position at the back in knowledge of foreign languages. Nevertheless, the author also remarked that nowadays there were new tendencies towards a better development of English as a Foreign Language, maybe given the current changes that were spreading in Europe around multilingualism –i.e. the introduction of CLIL in many schools, the establishment of the CEFR as a model for the design, evaluation and implementation of language learning programs,

or the implementation of the EHEA, which gave great relevance to language learning as a vehicle to foster the mobility and cooperation of people across Europe.

The poor level of foreign languages in Spain is also shown in several surveys conducted at European and national levels. The Eurobarometer 386 (Commission of the European Communities, 2012), for instance, tried to offer a general picture of the European citizens' experiences and perceptions with multilingualism and conclusions about Spain were not very encouraging. One of the long-term EU objectives in this respect is that every citizen of the EU should have practical skills in at least two foreign languages, something which is not very likely to be observed in Spain, where only a 18% of the population stated that they could speak at least two foreign languages (compared to a 25% average in the 27 countries of the EU) (Figure 1). It was also remarkable that only a 46% of the population could speak one foreign language (compared to an average of 54% in the EU), although in this respect it must be pointed out that there had been a slight improvement since 2005 (+2 points). This survey also revealed that the most spoken foreign language in Spain was English (followed by French and German), although only a 22% of the population said that they were able to speak it (worse than in 2005, when a 27% of the population could) (Figure 2). In fact, 22 countries scored higher than us in this aspect and a big difference could be seen when comparing our results to those of the Netherlands (where a 90% of the population can speak English), Sweden and Denmark (with an 86% of the population who was able to speak English), Austria and Cyprus (with a 73%) or Finland (with a 70%). This data, however, contrasted with the fact that 59% of Spaniards agreed (and 34% tended to agree) that everyone in the EU should speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, as it is mainly useful to communicate with friends (55%) and to get a job –either abroad (79%) or in Spain (60%) (Figures 3 and 4). Finally, the survey also revealed that the most common way to learn a foreign language in Spain was at school (48%), with school lessons being the most effective method for a 45% of respondents. This response, thus, placed a great responsibility on language teaching at schools, pointing them out as a crucial driving force for a future change.

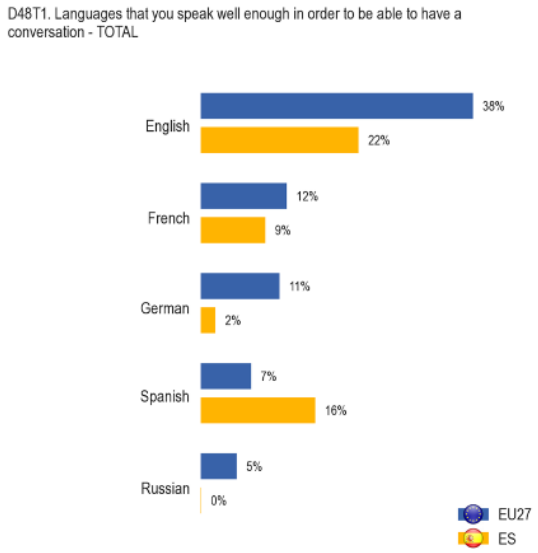

Figure 1: Number of languages that Europeans and Spaniards can speak as a foreign language (Extracted from Barometer 386).

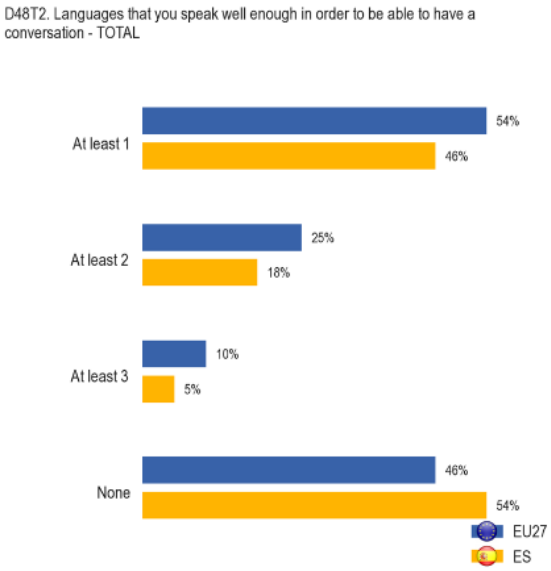

Figure 2: Languages that Europeans and Spaniards can speak (Extracted from Barometer 386).

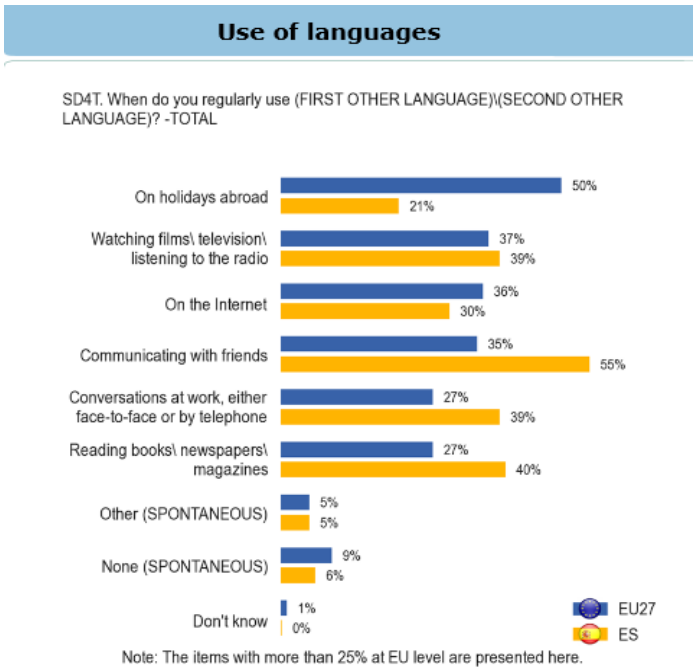

Figure 3. Main use of foreign languages in Spain and in Europe (Extracted from Barometer 386).

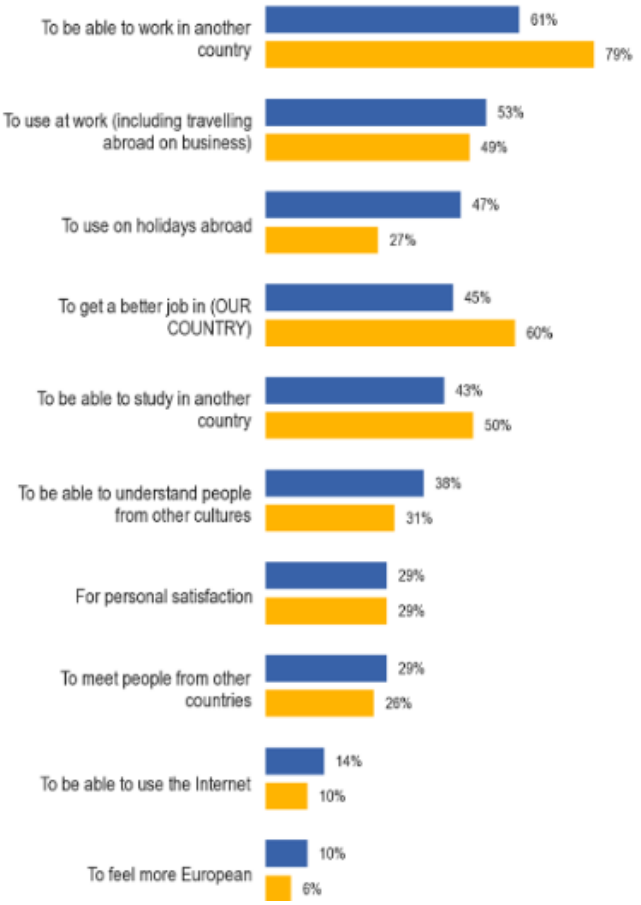

Figure 4. Main reason to learn a foreign language in Spain and in Europe (Extracted from Barometer 386)

Another interesting survey that shed light to this issue was the Barometer of February 2014 (CIS). According to this Barometer, only 25% of Spaniards could speak or write in English, with 61% of the respondents acknowledging that they could not speak it, write it, or read it. The area where respondents seemed to have more trouble was taking part in a conversation where they had to express their opinion (when compared to other simpler exchanges), something which indicated that the level was low. This, once again, clashed with the fact that Spaniards considered that learning English was very (65%) or quite (29%) important. Responsibility was once again placed upon schools and the education system, as 40% of respondents stated that our education system gave little importance to language teaching –namely to EFL.

The last survey that we will here analyse is the English Proficiency Index or EPI of 2014 (EF). This index was obtained through a ranking among the 63 countries where the school EF is established. In this case, it used the results of the 750,000 adults that took EF exams in 2013. According to this index, Spain was on the 20th position out of 63, although if we only considered Europe, then it was on the 17th position out of 24 –Denmark held the first position and the only EU countries below us were Portugal (21st), Slovakia (22nd), Italy (27th) and France (29th). The good news was that, according to this report, Spain was one of the countries that had improved the most regarding the EPI results of 2007 (+8.17), something which could be considered a change in attitude regarding language teaching in the country –i.e. English has become one of the most important subjects at school and it has been introduced through CLIL in many schools.

Now that we have proved the hypothesis regarding the poor level of English of Spanish students, the question is: why is this so? What are we doing wrong? In order to start making assumptions, we should familiarize with the social context of language learning, which can highly influence how well or how bad a language is learnt (Hall, 2011). This social context not only refers to the language classroom itself, but also to the school environment, to the home and neighbourhood environment, to the region and to the national and international setting and it depends on a series of factors, which Stern (1983) categorized in six types: linguistic factors, social and cultural factors, historical and political factors, geographical factors, economic and technological developments and educational factors.

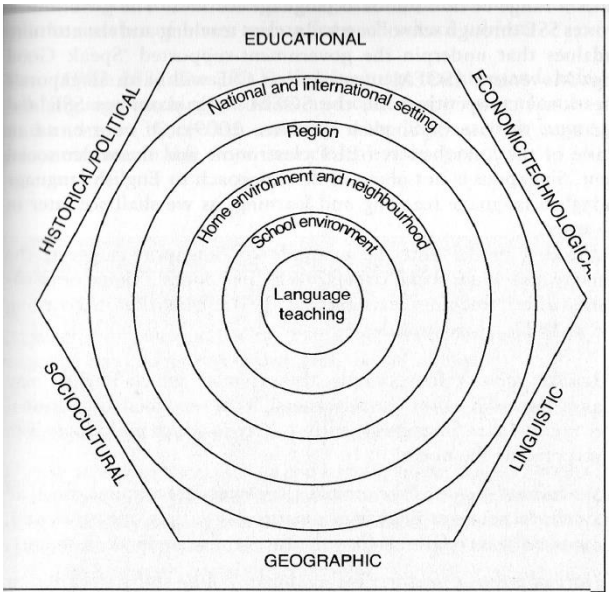

Figure 5. Social context and social factors that influence language learning (Extracted from Hall [2011]).

According to the authors, linguistic factors refer to the perceived acceptance of multilingualism in the community. In that respect, we can differentiate between two different types of communities: linguistically homogeneous communities and linguistically heterogeneous communities. Linguistically homogeneous communities are communities where inhabitants only speak one language, something which can be beneficial for language learning –as foreign language learners share the same L1 and therefore share the same problems when learning a new language– but which can also have detrimental effects as well –learners may not be open to an L2. Linguistic factors, on the other hand, also refer to the linguistic and cultural distance between the L1 and the L2, which can result in some language problems in the case of distant languages and cultures. Social and cultural factors determine how positively languages are seen according to their economic, political and cultural value –perceived economic, political and cultural status of the L2. Despite the disagreement of certain authors (see Carroll, 1975 – cited in Stern, 1983), socio-economic factors seem to play a role in language learning: the higher the status of the language, the more efficiently the language is learnt within the community. The popularity of a certain language depends, on the other hand, on the historical influences and the political and economic forces of the countries where they are spoken –i.e. English may be one of the most spoken foreign languages due to the former influence of the British Empire and due to the current influence of the US. Meanwhile, geographical aspects also influence language learning regarding the availability or non-availability of the target language within the language environment –second vs. foreign language– and the geographical distance between linguistic communities –the closer two linguistic communities are, the more likely they learn one another's

language as their L2 (i.e. the need for learning French in Germany or the Netherlands is greater than in Australia or New Zealand). Economic and technological development is also crucial for language learning given their interconnectedness –language teaching may be necessary in order that a country can evolve economically and technologically and language teaching, on the other hand, can be negatively affected by economic and technologic issues (i.e. some countries cannot invest or do not have the technology required for language learning). Finally, language learning can also be influenced by the educational framework of each country, which determines key factors of language learning such as the starting age, the years of training, the hours of training, the stages available or the degree of specialization.

Strevens (1987), on the other hand, explained the failure and success in learning and teaching languages basing it on four elements: 1) the community (C), divided into the public will –which determines the languages that should be learnt within the community– and the administration and organization –which interprets the public will by allocating funds, by training teachers or by providing spaces for this learning to happen; 2) the language teaching profession (P), which contributes to the understanding of the nature of language learning and teaching and which establishes certain principles for teachers to follow; 3) the teacher (T), who must fulfil certain characteristics in order to effectively guide students in their learning process; and 4) the learner (L), whose profile (skills and qualities) definitely shapes the learning process. Once he identified the sources of variability of achievement, he proposed a list of factors that were commonly associated with below-average achievement and a list of factors that were commonly linked to above-average achievement.

- Factors commonly associated with **below-average** achievement
    - Unwilling learners (L)
    - Low expectations of success (L) (C) –either personal or influenced by the community.
    - Unattainable aims and objectives (C)
    - Unsuitable syllabus (or no syllabus) (C)
    - Confusion between language learning and the study of literature (P)
    - Physical, organizational and psychological shortcomings (C)
    - Insufficient or excessive time or intensity of tuition (C)
    - Poor materials not compensated by good teachers (T)
    - Inadequate teacher training (C)
    - Incompetent class teaching and lack of interest in learners (T)
- Factors commonly associated with **above-average** achievement
    - Willing learners (L)
    - High expectations of success (L)(C)
    - Realistic and attainable aims (C)
    - Suitable syllabus (C)

- Competent organization of teaching/learning situation (C)
- Sufficient time (not excessive) at reasonably high rate of intensity (C)
- Helpful materials (T)
- Teachers adequately trained (C)

(Adapted from Strevens, 1987)

What happens if we analyse the situation of Spain according to Stern (1983) and Strevens' (1987) standards? Concerning Stern's (1983) standards, the situation of Spain is in general not detrimental for language learning. Spain is a linguistically heterogeneous country where learners in some regions are bilingual –something that should imply that students are open to learning other foreign languages. Moreover, English speaking countries are relatively close in geographical and cultural terms (especially the UK and Ireland), so learning English should relatively easy in Spain –even if languages are not linguistically close. On the other hand, the fact that English is the world's lingua franca is very influential as well: learning English is not only positively conceived from a social and cultural point of view, but also from a political and economic point of view. In order to see how the educational framework supports the teaching of English, we should go back to Morales Gálvez et al. (2000), who as we anticipated gave a very comprehensive point of view on the issue. According to them, foreign languages first arrived to the European education systems in secondary education stages, becoming a compulsory subject in most countries in the 1960s. However, language teaching did not extend to other stages of education until later –i.e. language teaching was introduced in primary education before 1970 in countries like Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Belgium (German region) but it was not introduced until the 80s in countries like Austria, the Netherlands or Portugal and until the 90s in countries like Spain, France, Greece, Italy, UK (Scotland) or Belgium (French region). The situation in Spain has rapidly changed since the 1990s, with the Government bringing the starting age forward, incrementing the years of training and the hours of tuition, and finally implementing a CLIL system in primary and secondary schools in the past two decades (Llinares and Dafouz, 2010).

Nevertheless, if we analyse Strevens' (1987) standards we can start to understand why Spanish students underperform when compared with their Europeans counterparts. Regarding learners, surveys have shown that there is a great interest in learning the language but that expectations of success are quite low –i.e. Alastuey and Agulló's (2012) study showed us that students are expected to finish their secondary studies with a B1 level of the CEFR, which is a quite a low level if we consider that they may have been studying the language for 12 or 15 years. The community is also to blame in this case, since it sets unattainable aims and objectives –i.e. our system expects learners to end up with a good oral command of the language when teachers cannot speak the language fluently as it has been observed (González

Otero, 2013). Moreover, it has also been observed that teachers' performance is not as effective as it should be. We only have to go back to Morales Gálvez et al. (2000), where the authors revise a series of studies on the field and come to the conclusions that: 1) teachers still think that grammar and vocabulary are the most important aspects to be taught; 2) teachers do not encourage students to use the foreign language in the classroom; and 3) activities are not varied enough –teachers tend to rely on textbooks too much and do not usually provide students with other alternative materials/resources.

A great source of problems is in fact the mismatch between what the syllabus says and what actually happens in the classroom. Morales Gálvez et al. (2000), for instance, summarized a series of common objectives, contents and recommendations that most European countries share regarding language learning –aims and contents that were not easily observed in the classroom as it was previously stated.

- Common objectives:
    - Using the language for communication purposes. Learning a foreign language means being able to communicate in it.
    - Developing a social and cultural identity by studying a foreign language and being able to reflect about one's own.
    - Promoting motivation to learn a foreign language. Students must see how enriching this experience is.
    - Encouraging students' cognitive development by increasing learner autonomy.
- Common contents:
    - The four skills (Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking) are given an equal importance.
    - Language use: most countries focus on morphosyntax, vocabulary (basic vocabulary related to the students' interests) and phonetics (accent, rhythm and intonation) applied to a communicative approach.
    - Socio-cultural aspects: knowing about the life and habits of the countries where the foreign language is spoken is considered quite important. This is reflected in the curricula of most countries.
- Common recommendations:
    - Using authentic and motivating materials
    - Enforcing a student-centred approach
    - Using ICTs as a communication tool or as resource by itself.

    (Adapted from Morales Gálvez et al., 2000)

Particularly interesting is the study carried out by Alastuey and Agulló (2012), where a very comprehensive analysis of the *Bachillerato*[4] curricula is provided. The authors of this paper not only pointed out the ambiguity of objectives and competences expected –i.e. there is no specific reference to the CEFR and therefore it is not clear what level students are expected to have at the end of these studies–, but also the contradictions of the system –i.e. students are supposed to equally work on the four language skills but, in their English University Admission Examinations they will only be assessed on their written skills (partial assessment of the communicative competence).

Students' oral skills, in fact, seem to be the weakest according to the Barometer of February 2014 (CIS), something that is maybe explained by this lack of assessment at the end of their studies (Alastuey and Agulló, 2012) and also by a lack of attention on the teachers' side, who might rather focus on grammar and vocabulary or who might rather faithfully follow the textbook and a pure teacher-centred model. It is for that reason that we will here focus on how to improve students' oral skills from different points of view –i.e. method, materials and so on.

2.2 Teaching Listening Comprehension

When trying to promote students' oral skills it is necessary that we fully understand what these skills involve and what others have previously done in order to teach them. For that reason, we will start this section by defining listening comprehension, which according to Lynch (1998 –cited in Martínez-Flor and Uso-Juan, 2006) involves a complex process that we use to understand and interpret spoken messages in real time using phonetic, phonological, prosodic, lexical syntactic, semantic and pragmatic sources. Rost (2001) goes a little bit beyond by saying that listening comprehension is also "the channel in which we process language in real time – employing pace, units of encoding and pausing that are unique to spoken language" (p.7).

Listening comprehension was a neglected skill for quite a long time since "some ELT methods assumed that listening ability will develop automatically through exposure to the language and through practice of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation" (Hedge, 2000:228). This fact, however, clashed with the use of the language in real life communication, where speakers devote a 45% of their time to listening and only a 9% to writing, a 16% to reading and 30% to speaking (see Rivers and Temperley, 1978; Oxford, 1993; and Celce-Murcia, 1995 –all cited in Hedge, 2000). In order to see how the role of listening comprehension developed throughout history, Martínez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2006) offered a very complete revision on the

[4] Last two years of pre-university education.

issue taking into account the different SLA approaches that prevailed in the 20th Century. The environmentalist approach, for instance, neglected this skill by viewing it as a passive process –learners received a stimulus and they should automatically respond to it. The environmentalist approach derived in fact in the audio-lingual method, where listening was not directly taught because it was taken for granted –all attention was given to the practice of pronunciation drills, the memorization of prefabricated patterns or the imitation of dialogues. Within the innatist approach, popular in the late 1960s, listening acquired an important role as a means to an end, as it was considered a crucial source of input and ultimately a crucial source of language acquisition. As a result, several teaching methods that involved listening first and then production appeared –i.e. Total Physical Response (Asher, 1969). Finally, the interactionist approach, which involved adopting an interactive, social and contextualized perspective to the language learning process, conceived listening as a mean in itself, and not just as a means to an end as it happened before. In this period, studies were carried out to analyse what comprehension involved and the effect of certain elements on comprehension –i.e. context– and, on the other hand, methods like the task-based approach or CLT appeared, which put listening at the centre of language learning. Martínez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2006), indeed, devised a communicative competence framework where listening was at the core of the discourse competence, which in turn was at the centre of the model, influenced by the linguistic competence, the pragmatic competence, the intercultural competence or the strategic competence.

Nowadays, the areas of research in the field of listening have evolved and multiplied quite a lot. For that reason, Rost (2001) decided to summarize some of them. An area of research which is still very popular is that of listening to develop SLA, an area that began with Krashen's (1982) studies (cited in Rost, 2001)–in order that SLA happens, the learner needs to receive "comprehensible input"– and that continued with authors such as Pica et al. (1996) (cited in Rost, 2001), who studied how different task types, interaction demands of tasks and interaction adjustments addressed L2 learners' needs and boosted their development. Another current area of research within this field is that of speech processing, which studies the factors that allow or inhibit the comprehensibility of input. According to this approach, each language has a set of "preferred strategies" to decode spoken messages, which involve four properties of the spoken language: the phonological system, phonotactic rules, tone melodies and the stress system. If there are big differences between the learners' L1 and L2, this could result in difficulties in spoken-word recognition for the L2 learner. Particularly interesting is also the area of listening in interactive settings, which focuses on the dynamics of interactive listening and the ways in which L2 speakers participate in conversations. Within this area we can find some other subcategories, such as cross-cultural pragmatics –i.e. the study of how conversation features

change across cultures–, or conversational analysis, which allows us to better understand why difficulties in comprehension arise among other things. Finally, a lot of attention has been paid lately to the area of listening strategies, which involves the use of "conscious plans to deal with incoming speech, particularly when the listener knows that he or she must compensate for incomplete input or partial understanding" (Rost, 2001:10). These strategies are varied and change from one author to the other, since there is a lot of controversy regarding the selection of strategies that ultimately boost the development of listening comprehension. Rost and Ross (1991 –cited in Rost, 2001), for example, believed that proficient listeners used more hypothesis testing (ask about specific information about the story) than lexical pushdowns (word meanings) and global reprises (general repetition), whereas Vandergrift (1996 –cited in Rost, 2001) stated that even if listeners used all kinds of metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies, metacognitive strategies were the ones used the most in higher levels of proficiency and thus the best ones.

Now that we learnt how the role of listening comprehension has changed across time, it is time to know more about the nature of listening comprehension –something crucial in order to deal with this area in the language classroom. The first thing we should know about listening comprehension is that it can be of different types and that, therefore, should be dealt with in different ways. Anderson and Lynch (1988 –cited in Nunan, 1989) talked about two types of listening: reciprocal listening, which refers to "listening tasks where there is the opportunity for the listener to interact with the speaker, and to negotiate the content of the interaction" (similar to Hedge's [2000] participatory category), and non-reciprocal listening, which entails "tasks such as listening to the radio or a formal lecture where the transfer of information is in one direction only –from the speaker to the listener" (similar to Hedge's [2000] non-participatory category). Richards (1987 –cited in Nunan, 1989), on the other hand, differentiated between two other types of listening, conversational listening and academic listening, assuming that they both entailed different skills for the learner.

<u>Skills involved in conversational listening:</u>

- Retain chunks of language for short periods
- Discriminate the sounds of the L2
- Recognize stress pattern of the words
- Recognize rhythmic structure of the L2
- Recognize the functions of stress and intonation
- Identify words in stressed and unstressed positions
- Recognize reduced form of words
- Recognize where one words ends and when the other starts

- Recognize typical word order pattern in the L2
- Recognize basic vocabulary
- Find key words (i.e. those that mark the topic)
- Guess the meaning of words thanks to context
- Recognize grammatical word classes
- Recognize main syntactic patterns and devices
- Recognize cohesive devices
- Recognize elliptical forms
- Recognize sentence constituents

Skills involved in academic listening:

- Identify purpose and scope of the lesson
- Identify topic and follow its development
- Identify parts of the discourse and the relationship among them
- Identify discourse markers and their meanings
- Infer relationships
- Recognize key lexical items relating to subject/topic
- Deduce meaning of words from context
- Recognize markers of cohesion
- Recognize function of intonation
- Detect attitude of the speaker towards subject matter

Regardless the type of listening that we are dealing with, Nunan (1989) agreed that there were certain skills which were necessary for successful listening and, thus, he proposed a summary of the most important skills required, which included segmenting speech into words and phrases, recognizing word classes, relating message to background knowledge, identifying the rhetorical and functional intent of the message, interpreting rhythm, stress and intonation, and extracting the gist of long texts without understanding every single word.

Another issue of the nature of listening that we should pay attention to is the type of processes and strategies that a learner can use when dealing with an oral text. The most common processes associated to listening comprehension are bottom-up and top-down processes, which are the two most important strategies a learner may enforce. Bottom-up processes involve working with the message itself and decoding it by separating its constituents (Nunan, 1989) and, thus, it entails the sub-processes of feature detection and metrical segmentation (Rost, 2006) –although it must be pointed out that listeners may also use some other kind of strategies, such as taking into account the stress on important words, using non-

verbal language, using lexical and syntactic rules to complete the missing information or anticipating what could come next. In bottom-up processes, memory plays a very important role, since listeners have to retain all the incoming input before they put into use their listening strategies. Memory, however, can be of different types depending on the kind of process a learner is going to perform: it can be echoic when we need to retain sequences of words for initial analysis, it can be short-term when we need to retain various parts of the message to infer meaning and to decide what we need to retain, and it can be long-term when we want to retain the gist of the message (Hedge, 2000). Top down processes, on the other hand, require the use of background knowledge to understand a message –i.e. bringing information from outside the text to understand it– and involve two different sub-processes: lexical access (recognition of certain words) and activation of schemata. From these two sub-processes, the most important one is the activation of learners' schemata, which refers to the prior knowledge a learner may have on various relevant areas. These schemata can be of two different kinds: formal schemata, which entail knowing the structure of certain speech events, and content schemata, which include world knowledge, sociocultural knowledge, topic knowledge and even local knowledge (Hedge, 2000). Although these two processes seem independent and mutually exclusive, authors like Hedge (2000) believe that learners must combine them in order to make sense of spoken texts effectively –"they work simultaneously and are mutually dependent" (p.234).

However, these are not the only strategies that a language learner must use in order to effectively perform listening comprehension. Rost (2006), for instance, suggested that there were five strategies that were directly linked to successful listening and efficient progress in gaining listening skills: 1) predicting speaker's intentions and activating ideas; 2) monitoring one's own comprehension; 3) asking for clarification; 4) making inferences from incomplete information; and 5) providing personal responses about content. Hedge (2000), on the other hand, listed a series of uncertainties that listeners might face and proposed a series of measures that teachers could take in order to fix them –one of them was teaching students listening strategies, such as asking for repetition directly, reformulating what the speaker said to check comprehension, or using non-verbal language and back-channels to maintain the flow.

Another issue that is worth discussing when talking about the nature of listening comprehension is the nature of input that learners receive. In this respect, the first thing we should observe is the potential functions of input. As we have previously seen, many authors believe that learner input is the main source of SLA. However, does mere exposure to input result in L2 acquisition? Contrary to this belief, Rost (2006) stated that in order that input resulted in L2 acquisition, learners had to be exposed to a great quantity of input and engage

with it –i.e. understanding input in meaningful ways, engaging in interactions and tasks based on that input, and paying attention to the form of the input. On the other hand, Rost (2006) also analysed the different factors that affected the quality of input, namely relevance (personal significance of input so that it enhances intrinsic motivation), difficulty (cognitive processes required to effectively understand a text), and authenticity. From these three factors, difficulty and authenticity seem to be the most popular elements observed in literature as we could previously see in other sections. However, a lot of scholars wonder if learners should be presented with authentic but more complicated texts or with slow-paced scripted language that does not represent real spoken language. As we could see before, many authors like Rost (2006) or Hedge (2000) in this case believe that the use of contrived texts is not the solution, since learners need to get used to real language if they really want to manage real listening situations. However, letting our students confront authentic texts alone can be very demanding, since they have to face a lot of unfamiliar language with a possible non-standard accent or in an accelerated pace. A possible solution is therefore to select such texts so that they are not that difficult –we must remember that difficulty depends on length, speed, familiarity, information density or text organization, so it can be easily controlled– and to provide students with all types of compensatory resources –i.e. elaborating a text, providing prior scaffolding or providing students with listening strategies. If we revise literature, we will be able to find a lot of examples of authors who showed how learners could comprehend and learn from authentic aural input. This is the case of Bacon (1992), who proved that learners were able to deal with and learn from authentic texts as long as they had been trained to take control of their strategies. Apart from these three factors that Rost (2006) mentioned, we can also come up with other factors that affect the quality of input, such as the channel of delivery or the type of texts that learners are confronted with (Hedge, 2000). Regarding the first one, it is interesting to compare audio-only texts with audiovisual texts. In most language classrooms students are only presented with audio-only texts, something which is unnecessarily restricting and which does not reflect reality, where speakers are usually able to see the other person and to use non-verbal language to understand the other person better. Regarding the types of texts that learners are confronted with, it is interesting to be aware of them in order to see which ones are potentially more difficult to the learner –i.e. natural spontaneous conversations tend to be more difficult than scripted or unscripted monologues, especially when it happens between speakers who share a lot of prior knowledge.

Finally, another thing that we must take into account when defining the nature of listening is the difficulties that it may entail for the leaner. According to Rost (2006) and Hedge (2000), the main problems that affect learners' comprehension are asymmetry in roles, negative affect –especially when they have had negative experiences in the past–, and anxiety and self-

confidence –i.e. learners think they must understand every single word of a text and, if they do not, they tend to suffer anxiety and end up underperforming. Considering the negative effects these problems may have on the performance of listening comprehension, it is reasonable that we try to analyse them in order to provide students with problem-solving decisions and techniques to counteract them –i.e. by adjusting our listening activities so that they are not too demanding and so that they trigger contextualization and prior knowledge, or by encouraging students to be more exposed to the language and to move towards some kind of autonomous development.

Everything we know about the nature of listening comprehension and about how it has been dealt with in the past helps us better plan how to practice listening comprehension in the language classroom. Thanks to everything we know, for instance, we now conceive the listening task in three stages: a pre-listening stage, a while-listening stage and a post-listening stage (Hedge, 2000). The pre-listening stage is where the teacher and the student prepare for the listening task, familiarizing with the topic/vocabulary/structures, activating prior knowledge and growing some kind of interest on the task. The list of possible pre-listening activities is quite long, but Hedge (2000) summarized the most relevant ones: predicting content from the title, talking about a picture which relates to the text, discussing the topic of the text, answering a set of questions about the topic, brainstorming key vocabulary on the topic, or providing information about the setting and the role relationships between participants. The while-listening stage is where the actual listening comprehension happens. However, we cannot assume that just providing the student with input is enough. Hedge (2000), for instance, believed that learners should be provided with activities to engage in while on task, as they can be used to adjust the text to different proficiency levels and as they serve as a guide for students to follow the oral text –i.e. they may encourage the learner to follow information, to respond to attitudes expressed, to reflect on what was said, to take general notes, or to write down specific points among other things. Finally, the post-listening stage is where students can check and discuss their responses to the while-listening task. This stage is not only important because it provides students with the necessary feedback, but also because it can be used to further improve students' listening skills –i.e. the teacher might show students the transcript and focus on certain key features–, as well as other relevant skills –i.e. a post-listening discussing might lead to students practicing their speaking skills.

Literature on this field has also helped us determine what an effective teaching of listening involves. Rost (2006), for instance, summarized the principles that listening instruction should entail: improving learners' comprehension of spoken language, increasing learners' intake from spoken input, developing learners' strategies for better understanding of spoken discourse and

engendering a more active participation in face-to-face communication. This could be complemented with what he himself said about what effective teaching of listening involved in 2001 (Rost, 2001), which included a careful selection of input resources that were appropriately authentic, interesting, varied and challenging, a creative design of tasks that allowed learners to activate their knowledge and to monitor what they were doing, or the integration of listening with other language skills. Finally, we should not forget Hedge (2000) and her recommendations about how to deal with students' uncertainties when facing a listening comprehension –i.e. uncertainties of confidence, uncertainties deriving from presentation of speech, uncertainties because of gaps in the message, uncertainties of the language, uncertainties of content, or visual uncertainties.

Particularly interesting is Lund's (1990) approach to the selection of effective listening tasks for the language classroom, an approach which takes into account two different factors: the listener function and the listener response. The listener function, as he puts it, refers to "the aspects of the message the listener attempts to process" (p.107) and it can be of six types: identification –i.e. recognizing familiar words, looking for categories of words and so on–, orientation –i.e. determining some key aspects of the text, such as participants, roles or genres– , main idea comprehension, detail comprehension, full comprehension, and replication –i.e. the aim of the task is to reproduce the message. Regarding listener response, Lund (1990) defined it as "what the listener does to demonstrate successful listening" (p.109) and categorized it into the following categories: doing –i.e. following certain instructions–, choosing, transferring information from one form into another, answering questions, condensing, extending, duplicating, modelling, and conversing. Lund (1990) believed that the combination between functions and responses provided a myriad of possibilities for the language classroom and that we should make use of all these possibilities when designing listening tasks –learners may need to exercise different things at different times of their development.

This is in line with White's (2006) work, who questioned the traditional model for teaching listening comprehension because it dealt with task design in a quite rigid way. According to this author, the traditional model for teaching listening comprehension was composed by nine different stages: 1) the selection of listening material, which was performed by the teacher; 2) the pre-listening stage; 3) the provision of gist questions for students to answer after their first listening; 4) the first listening itself; 5) the feedback for the answers to the gist questions; 6) the provision of detailed questions for students to answer after the second listening; 7) the second listening, where students complete the detailed questions; 8) the feedback for the answers to the detailed questions (these two steps can be repeated); and 9) the presentation of an optional extension activity. White (2006) believed that the problem with this model was that it did not

allow students to take responsibility of their own learning, to take an active role in the listening process, to reflect about cultural aspects or to perform their listening in a sequence different to the one here presented. Taking all this into account, White (2006) proposed to improve the teaching of listening by tackling the weak points of the traditional model –i.e. by allowing students to choose what they wanted to listen, to make their own listening texts, to control the equipment, to give the instruction, to design their own listening tasks or to reflect on their problems in listening.

Studies like the ones we have just seen allow us to conceive future trends and directions in the field of teaching listening comprehension, a field where listening pedagogy and listening technology seem to be taking a central position (Rost, 2001). The latter is particularly interesting for us, since the arrival of new technologies has not only increased the availability of input resources, but has also brought new concerns –i.e. training leaners how to use ICTs in the best way. For that reason, this will be one of the central areas of our study to which we will devote our attention.

2.3 Teaching Speaking/Oral Production

Martínez-Flor, Uso-Juan and Alcón Soler (2006) defined speaking as a complex process of constructing meaning and as an interactive, social and contextualized communication event. Bygate (2006), on the other hand, pointed out that speaking was very different from other areas of language learning, as it was characterized by its impermanence –it cannot be further consulted or analysed–, and by the fact that it leaves no time for planning and monitoring. Moreover, in his work in 2001 (Bygate, 2001), he also concluded that oral language was quite different from written language regarding its typical grammatical, lexical and discourse patterns, as well as regarding the processing skills that it entailed.

Now that its uniqueness and its role in language learning are clear, it can be easily pointed out that its development should be crucial in the SLA process –it not only allows students to communicate, but it can also be considered a mean to foster SLA. However, this has not always been the case, as the field of speaking did not occupy an important position in language learning until recently. It all started with the first big teaching method, the grammar-translation approach, which marginalized the teaching of communication skills –for the long time this method was enforced, the teaching of speaking was not even observed. Things changed a little with the arrival of the environmentalist approach, which hypothesized that the learning process was conditioned by the external environment and therefore gave more relevance to speaking, as the language was mainly an oral phenomenon. This approach led to the appearance of the

audio-lingual method, where the oral skills were considered more important than the written skills but where, at the same time, they were considered a means-to-an-end –"speaking was considered as an effective medium for providing language input and facilitating memorization rather than a discourse skill in its own right" (Martínez-Flor et al., 2006:141). Within the innatist approach, the area of speaking was not very developed, as attention was then paid to the learners' internal faculties to learn the language (Martínez-Flor et al., 2006). However, with the interactionist approach the importance of speaking emerged again. On the one hand, this approach led to the communicative method, which highlighted the role of speaking as a mean of communication. Speaking became a communicative function that was affected by the context in which it was produced, which meant that spoken training could not involve repeating single words or creating oral utterances in isolation anymore (Bygate, 2001; Martínez-Flor et al., 2006). On the other hand, this approach also led to a functional view of language, where speakers were supposed to use the language in order to fulfil a number of functions given a particular cultural and social context (Martínez-Flor et al., 2006). The authors that we have just cited, in fact, devised a communicative competence framework in which the role of speaking was central, as it was part of the discourse competence that represented the core of this model. Finally, the area of speaking received the attention required in our days given the contribution of certain areas of study (Bygate, 2001): 1) the study of oral discourse, which shows the difference between oral and written discourse; 2) the study of L2 use, which shows the problems that L2 learners face as well as the skills they need when communicating in the target language; and 3) the study of oral L2 within task-based contexts, which explores how learners' communicative performance can be influenced through communication practice.

Nowadays, research on the area of speaking is varied, as we can see from the brief summaries provided to us by Bygate (2001, 2006). One of the main areas of research on the field, for instance, focuses on the characteristics of speech. Particularly relevant is the contribution of Level (1989 –cited in Bygate, 2001), who distinguished four processes involved in speech production: 1) conceptualization –the planning of the message content according to background knowledge, knowledge about the topic or speech situation, and knowledge of patterns of discourse; 2) formulation –finding the words and phrases to express meaning, sequencing them and adding appropriate grammatical markers; 3) articulation –motor control of the articulatory organs; and 4) self-monitoring –identifying and self-correcting mistakes. These processes could be influenced by a number of factors, namely the degree of automation, the context, or the live or "online" production –which entails time pressure, references to interlocutors, the physical time and place of communication, the avoidance to lose face, the relationship between speakers or the introduction of formulaic speech, repetition, or adjustments. Another relevant area of research is that of development in L2 speech, which

places all the attention in task selection. Here we should point out the role of task repetition, largely supported by Bygate (2001, 2006) –"task recycling seems to provide the basis for learners to integrate their fluency, accuracy and complexity of formulation around what becomes a familiar conceptual base" (Bygate, 2001:17). The author devoted a great deal of his work to this issue and justified its relevance from different points of view. First of all, he resorted to the features of oral discourse, which he considered more demanding than those of written discourse, and argued that repetition could be used meaningfully to master them –in the discourse level, the repetition of whole stretches of talk can be used for good functional reasons, and in the utterance level, the repetition of words and phrases could be used as part of routine topics and genres and in order to maintain fluency. Bygate (2006) also justified the use of repetition citing the sociolinguistic dimension of talk, since he believed that in order to share a social context with other speakers, the repetition of content and means was necessary –such repetition promotes a shared understanding of the world and a higher degree of solidarity among speakers. Another area of research that Bygate (2006) analysed was the psycholinguistics of speech processing and language development, which he linked to repetition arguing that learners could benefit from constructive repetition in the conceptualization, formulation and output phases: repetition helped in the conceptualization stage because it allowed learners to become familiar with the content of the talk, to organize it and to explore additional content to add; it also helped on the formulation stage since it enhanced learners to identify and remember vocabulary and grammar, to try alternative vocabulary and grammatical resources, to monitor the grammatical features required by the vocabulary and the syntax, and to develop cohesion; on the other hand, it was relevant on the output stage because it allowed learners to attend to speech production and to interlocutors' understanding. Finally, Bygate (2006) linked the relevance of repetition with the impact of pedagogical tasks on oral language development by stating that when learners repeat the same speech activity, they can play less attention to content and more attention to the way they say things.

> If we assume that our attention capacity is limited, then it follows that learners will often not be able to attend to all aspects of the speech production process, and that therefore they will have to prioritize what they will attend to […] Speakers will spend more effort sorting out what they want to say, and trying to find some ways of saying it under the time pressures of the activity, and will devote less effort to monitoring for accuracy, or to self-correcting when necessary (p.170).

It seems clear that we need to know a little bit about the history and about the development in research in the area when trying to understand how to teach speaking. However, something that is also important to consider is the nature of speaking. One crucial element of the nature of speaking is the classification of speaking into different types, a classification which changes from one author to the other. Brown and Yule (1983 –cited in Nunan, 1989), for instance, talked

about two types of speaking according to the different functions they had: 1) transactional speaking, where the main aim was the transfer of information; and 2) interactional speaking, where the main aim was the maintenance of social relationships. The same authors, on the other hand, also proposed the classification of speaking in two other categories namely monologues and dialogues (see also Hedge, 2000). Another possibility is to classify speaking according to the different genres they represent, something which Hedge (2000) defines as "a concept that links the purpose of a particular type of spoken discourse to its overall structure" (p.265) –i.e. narrating a story, conducting an interview, carrying out a business presentation and so on.

Something that is also relevant regarding the nature of speaking is the skills and strategies that it involves. Hedge (2000), for example, proposed a list of skills and strategies that were necessary to speak in a foreign language. Such list included distinguishing the different types of speaking situations to choose the correct genre, managing interaction –i.e. following the rules of interaction regarding openings and closings, fixed routines, turns, or topic management–, and showing fluency together with making oneself understood through the use of communication strategies –i.e. Faerch and Casper (1983 –cited in Hedge, 2000) suggested using avoidance behaviours or achievement behaviours when lacking the vocabulary needed to express something and Hedge (2000) also mentioned the key role of negotiation of meaning to keep the conversation flow even when there were gaps of knowledge. Bygate (1987 –cited in Nunan, 1989), on the other hand, distinguished between two different types of skills that were necessary in speaking: motor-perceptive skills –which entail using the sounds and structures of the language correctly–, and interactional skills –which entail using the motor-perceptive skills in order to communicate. In the past, learners were only taught the first type of skills, but later it was discovered that learners also benefited from practicing the knowledge acquired in communicative interaction as we have previously seen. Meanwhile, Nunan (1989) also proposed a summary of skills that were necessary for a successful oral communication, which included the following items: 1) articulating phonological features of the language comprehensibly; 2) mastering stress, rhythm and intonation; 3) showing fluency; 4) mastering transactional and interactional skills; 5) being able to take short and long speaking turns; 6) possessing skills of interaction management; 6) possessing skills in negotiation of meaning; 7) mastering conversational listening skills; 8) knowing about and negotiating purposes for conversations; and 9) using conventional formulae and fillers in the correct way (Nunan, 1989). Finally, O'Sullivan (2008), basing himself on Bygate (1987), suggested that communicative interactions required enforcing three types of skills: 1) routine skills, which included informational –i.e. expository and evaluative– and interactional skills; 2) improvisation skills, which refer to negotiation of meaning and management of interaction; and 3) microlinguistic

skills. O'Sullivan (2008) also made reference to the processing system that underlies speech production, which according to him is composed by cognitive processes –i.e. conceptualizers, pre-verbal message, linguistic formulator, phonetic plan, articulator, overt speech, audition, speech comprehension and monitoring–, and by cognitive resources –i.e. content knowledge (background knowledge or knowledge provided by the task) and language knowledge (grammatical, discoursal, functional and sociolinguistic).

Now that we know everything that needs to be known about the theory of speaking, we only need to analyse the pedagogical implications of all the elements here defined in order to describe how the teaching of speaking in the language classroom should be. Hedge (2000) provided the most comprehensive list of recommendations to be applied in the language classroom from all the authors here reviewed. Her first recommendation was that teachers should talk with students about what was needed for effective speaking in order that students were aware of it. That included talking about registers and when to use them, teaching them strategic competence –i.e. how to open a conversation, how to ask for repetition, slower delivery or clarification, how to check comprehension, how to get information about the language or how to keep the flow of the conversation going–, and talking about how to manage interaction in a direct or indirect way –i.e. through mere practice of the language.

Hedge (2000) also recommended teachers to create range and variety in the language course, making activities vary regarding the number of participants –i.e. monologues and conversations with two or more speakers–, the type of contexts, and the focus of activities –i.e. accuracy-based activities against fluency-based activities (see also O'Sullivan [2008] and his list of task types and formats). Regarding the focus of activities, different considerations need to be observed when designing activities of one or another type. In order to design accuracy-based activities, for instance, teachers have to take into account students' needs, which can be of four types: the need for contextualized practice, the need for personalized language –i.e. language that is adjusted to what students may want to say–, the need to understand how the social use of language works, and the need to build confidence. If the teacher, on the other hand, wants to promote fluency among students, he/she can choose from three main types of activities: free discussions, role plays and "gap" activities. Free discussions are beneficial for the practice of speaking because they allow students to deal with a wide range of topics and to practice the language and the strategies required to sustain a conversation since they are very close to interpersonal communication in real life. They, however, do not come without problems –when students face free discussions they may not feel confident to express opinions about topics they might not know about and, on top of that, they may feel subordinated to the interventions of more proficient students, who tend to dominate the conversation. Teachers should therefore

offer support in order that students effectively engage in the activity –i.e. providing students with instructions, pictures or quotations to get the discussion started, and establishing goals for the discussion among other things. In the case of role-plays, their benefits are associated to the fact that they are usually performed in pairs or groups (and thus entail cooperative learning), to the fact that students feel more confident when acting as someone else, to the fact that they may serve as practice for future real-life situations, and the fact that students can experience a great number of registers and contexts, as roles can be very different. Nevertheless, role-plays can also be problematic because they may make some students participate less –i.e. especially when they do not have a key role in the activity–, and because they may lead to situations where students do not identify with the character they are given and therefore are less encouraged to speak. As a result, teachers need to structure the interaction so that all speakers have a chance to participate in equal terms and so that students can easily identify with the characters they are given. Finally, "gap" activities are beneficial for the development of fluency because they involve pair work –which aims at cooperative learning as we previously suggested, and it is also less threatening than individual work–, because they are more effective when it comes to negotiation of meaning and because they are quite motivating –i.e. students feel challenged to solve a problem.

Another recommendation made by Hedge (2000) is to enforce error correction, something which is necessary and effective for the development of speaking skills as it has been shown by research. Within this area, however, there are certain considerations we need to observe such as the type of errors that should be corrected and the types of errors that should not –i.e. global errors over local errors and systematic errors over isolated mistakes. Another thing that should be taken into account is the type of feedback we provide our students with, whether negative feedback (correction) or positive feedback (encouragement), and their balanced use. When using negative feedback, it is also important to use different strategies –i.e. making decisions about how to indicate that an error was made or where the error was, as well as making decisions on whether to provide the correction or to encourage self-correction. According to these decisions, we can have very different types of corrective feedback categorized as explicit or implicit. The latter type is composed by two subcategories, recasts –reformulation of the error in the correct way– and negotiation strategies –they draw attention to the mistake but they do not offer the correct form. The latter can be classified in the following categories: clarification requests, repetition, confirmation and comprehension checks (Bower and Satomi, 2011). Moreover, we should also consider when to provide the feedback: should we interrupt students to provide them with error correction when they make a mistake or should we leave our feedback for the end of the class? Hedge (2000) believed that "teacher intervention" was more common of non-communicative classes while "no teacher intervention" was more common of

communicative tasks. In the latest case, errors could be worked after the intervention in different ways –i.e. taking notes and giving feedback later, recording the activity for future analysis, making students take notes of their classmates' errors, or noting down errors and addressing them in future lessons.

Furthermore, Hedge (2000) also recommended paying attention to organizational matters, such as the structure of activities –i.e. are activities easy to follow?–, the organization of students to deal with a task –i.e. individual or in groups–, or the measures taken to create a friendly atmosphere for students to feel comfortable. Finally, Hedge (2000) also decided to pay attention to pronunciation, but this is something we will further develop in our next section, which specially addresses this issue.

So far we have seen some general recommendations on how to deal with the teaching of speaking. However, we must not forget that nowadays there are more varied and innovative proposals, such as the one proposed by Bygate (2001, 2006): task repetition. As we previously saw, task repetition is believed to be crucial in effective speaking, since it allows students to work on fluency and accuracy at the same time. For that reason, Bygate (2006) decided to list a series of contexts where we can introduce constructive repetition. One of them was task talk, a context in which we can introduce external (repeating a talk to different students), internal repetition (repeating information within our talk), or even a combination of both –i.e. in three phase jigsaw tasks, students in a group are given four complementary readings/listening tasks, they have to regroup to gather information and then they have to present the solution to the rest of the class (thus relying on external and internal repetitions). Another context where repetition might be relevant is whole-class talk, since repetition can arise in plenary topics –i.e. students repeat topics of discussion with the class–, pre- and post-task talk –i.e. pre-task talk can be used as meaningful rehearsal of the vocabulary and structures that will be used during the task while post-task talk can provide students with the opportunity to re-use everything learnt during the task–, and in classroom management –i.e. structures and vocabulary used to manage a classroom might be repeated.

Proposals like this one help us get an insight of the current and future trends of research in the area, which also revolve around the development of certain specific oral skills (see Brumfit [1984] on the development of fluency, or Willis [1996] and Skehan [1998] on the development of complexity, accuracy or fluency), the creation of an effective oral language syllabus (see Riggerbach, 1999), or the need for longitudinal studies to see the effects of task type and task conditions on speaking development.

2.4 Teaching Pronunciation –segmentals, intonation, and stress & rhythm

We finally decided to devote a section to pronunciation, an area that even if it is part of oral production deserves some further consideration, as it is crucial in the development of communicative skills and as it has been traditionally neglected as we will later see.

Pronunciation was defined by Seidlhofer (2001) like this:

> [Pronunciation entails the] production and perception of the significant sounds of a particular language in order to achieve meaning. This comprises the production and perception of segmental sounds, of stressed and unstressed syllables, and of the 'speech melody' or intonation. Also the way we sound is influenced greatly by factors such as voice quality, speech rate and overall loudness (p.56).

Pronunciation, as it can be seen in this definition, can be divided into segmentals and suprasegmentals, composed, on the other hand, by intonation and stress & rhythm. When we talk about segmentals, we refer to the different sounds within a language, which we usually call phonemes –even if different people may pronounce sounds differently, it is considered the same phoneme (in a given language) when it does not change the meaning of the word (Kelly, 2000). Phonemes are then subdivided in two categories: consonant sounds and vowel sounds. Consonant sounds are usually classified depending if they are voiced –when the vocal chords in the larynx vibrate– or unvoiced –when the vocal chords do not vibrate–, although they can also be classified according to the manner of articulation –i.e. plosives, affricatives, fricatives, nasals, laterals and approximants. Vowels, on the other hand, are all voiced and can be divided into single vowels –which in the case of English can be short (alphabet vowel sounds) or long (relative vowel sounds)– and diphongs/triphtongs –which involve the movement from one sound to another and which can be centring (ending towards the schwa sound) or closing (ending towards an /i/ or /u/ sound). Particularly interesting is the existence of the schwa sound in English, which is a neutral sound mainly used to structure rhythm and stress as we will later see (Kelly, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2001).

Traditionally, attention was largely paid to the previous category, although eventually scholars realized of the importance of suprasegmentals or "features of speech which generally apply to groups of segments or phonemes" (Kelly, 2000:3), as they are considered very important in the production and the comprehension of language. The first subcategory within suprasegmentals is intonation, which can be defined as the "speech melody" and which is

composed of different tones or movements of voice pitch which can be of two types: upward or downward moves/glides. The choices for pitch movement are usually quite limited:

- Voice goes up (Raising tone)
- Voice goes down (Falling tone)
- Voice remains on the same level (Level)
- Combination of the previous:
    - Rise-fall
    - Fall-rise

(Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994)

Intonation has a wide variety of functions, as we can use pitch movement to mean different things. The most common ones in English are the following ones (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994; Kelly, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2001):

- Changes in pitch for grammatical purposes. Some examples:
    - Information questions (with who, what, where...): falling intonation when asked for the first time.
    - Imperatives: falling intonation.
    - Lists of items: rising, rising and finally falling.
- Changes in pitch to represent certain attitudes and emotions –i.e. with the back-channel "mmm" we can mean different things (surprise, agreement, doubt…).
- Changes in pitch to distinguish new from old information
    - We can distinguish 3 kinds of pitches or keys (term coined by Brazil, 1985b):
        - High key
        - Mid key
        - Low key
    - They are used to indicate the relationship between successive tone units
        - High key: it normally introduces a topical sequence, so it can be interpreted as emphatic (contrastive).
        - Mid key: used to continue the topical sequence, so it can be interpreted as simply adding information (additive). It is usually the neutral or unmarked choice.
        - Low key: it is often used to mark the ending of a topical sequence, so it can be interpreted as "as you would expect" (equative).
- Changes in pitch to manage conversation –i.e. turn-taking, introducing/ending topics, linking ideas and so on.

- Changes in pitch to make certain information noticeable/prominent
  i.e. JOHN gave me this present (John, not anybody else)
  John GAVE me this present (He gave it to me, he didn't lend it to me)
  John gave ME this present (He gave it to me, not anybody else)
  John gave me THIS present (He gave me this present, not that one over there)
- Changes in pitch to mark relationship established between speakers (dominant vs. non-dominant speaker): dominant speakers may use a very marked version of proclaiming tones (rise-fall and falling tones) which is not acceptable for non-dominant speakers.

Stress and rhythm, on the other hand, refer to the way we use to emphasize certain sounds of speech and the combination of these stressed (or emphasized) sounds with unstressed sounds to create a given pattern. When talking about stress, thus, we can talk about two types: stress on the syllable and word-stress. Stress on the syllable refers to the fact that every syllable has a peak, followed by certain sounds depending on the rules of the language. This is further complemented with the fact that, within a word, some syllables are much more prominent than others. Every word has a combination of stressed (normally one) and unstressed syllables, which makes up for the word stress pattern. This prominence, or stress, is important to make speech clear and can be signalized in three different ways: 1) pitch change; 2) the length of syllable; and 3) loudness (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994; Kelly, 2000). However, it must be pointed out that placing the stress in English in the correct syllable may not be easy, as there are no general rules in this respect like in other languages.

Kelly (2000), on the other hand, defined rhythm as the "movement marked by the regulated succession of strong and weak elements", which applied to languages translated into a pattern of contrasts between unstressed and stressed syllables. Rhythm, moreover, has something to do with time as well and makes languages divide into two different categories: syllabled-timed languages, where "syllables follow each other at identical time intervals" (Kelly, 2000: 40) and where therefore there are no strong patterns of stress; and stress-timed languages, where "stress [tends to occur] at equal intervals" (Kelly, 2000:41), which implies that certain syllables have to be made shorter by reducing the quality of their vowels (in English this translates into converting this vowels in schwa sounds) and that some words (mainly function words) have to be pronounced in their weak form (a reduced version that is used when they are not stressed). Some authors like seeing these two categories as the two extremes of a continuum, implying that all languages have a tendency to reduce vowels of unstressed syllables (Dalton and Seidlhofer, 1994). However, the truth is that there is big difference between languages that are

syllable-timed oriented –i.e. Spanish– and languages that are stressed-timed oriented ¬–i.e. English–, something which turns out to be problematic in language learning.

When trying to understand why pronunciation is so important in language learning, we must distinguish what aspects of pronunciation are relevant for the foreign language speaker. Seidlhofer (2001), for instance, suggested that pronunciation played two main roles in language learning: representing the speakers' identity and being responsible for intelligibility. Regarding the first aspect, Seidlhofer (2001) pointed out that people's accents expressed two personal aspects: 1) membership to a particular community, something which among other things determined speaker's relationship with other groups –i.e. is the L2 well accepted by the L1 community? Does becoming part of the L2 community make students reject their own identity?; and 2) individual identity –i.e. do learners feel connected to the L2 community for personal reasons? According to this, students may decide to adapt more or less to the L2 pronunciation, depending on a matter of personal identity. Concerning the second aspect, that of intelligibility, it must be pointed out that for most scholars this is the ultimate role of pronunciation –since acquiring a native-like pronunciation is not attainable or even desirable for everyone. Kenworthy (1987) described intelligibility as the ability to produce as many understandable words as possible, implying that even if sounds were mispronounced, this did not affect the meaning of words. Nevertheless, she also pointed out that the ultimate objective of being intelligible was to communicate, so she suggested that intelligibility also implied being able to communicate intentions and to attain effective communication –that achieved to accomplish its goals without entailing too much effort (from the speaker and the listener point of view). According to the author, intelligibility was not only affected by the main pronunciation features that we have just analysed (segmentals, intonation and stress & rhythm), but also by other factors such as speakers' hesitations and idiosyncratic speech habits, or such as the listeners' familiarity with the foreign accent or the listeners' ability to use contextual clues in understanding.

According to everything we have seen until here, it could be assumed that the teaching of pronunciation is crucial within a language learning process. However, this area has not always been appropriately dealt with throughout history. In fact, even if this area has been one of interest for a long time, it must be pointed out that it was usually studied in isolation from other areas of language learning (Seidlhofer, 2001). In the methodological approaches between the 1930s and the 1960s, for example, pronunciation was considered a priority, although the approach to teaching it was maybe not the best, as it was mainly based on articulatory explanations, imitation, memorization of patterns and correction, not a very communicative approach (Morley, 1991). In the 1960s, the structuralist language description and the behaviourist views of language learning relegated pronunciation to a less important position and

language syllabuses started giving less attention to pronunciation. The later arrival of CLT method also caused some dilemma on the field since, on the one hand, it relied on the fact that intelligible pronunciation was an essential component of communicative competence (Morley, 1991) but, on the other hand, it encouraged a focus on meaning and not on form, making it difficult for students to learn about pronunciation (Seidlhofer, 2001). According to Morley (1991), this tendency started to be reversed in the latest decades as it could be seen from the growing number of papers on the field, the appearance of teacher resource books on teaching pronunciation or several language reference books on the field.

Research on the field nowadays is mainly divided in two areas according to Seidlhofer (2001): linguistic description and SLA & pedagogy. Studies on the first field date back to the antiquity, although they mainly relied on the study of phonetics. Recent advances on the field include the interest for suprasegmental features of speech –i.e. the study of the function of intonation or the study of stress-timed languages vs. syllable-timed languages–, and the study of long-term articulatory poses that influence accents –i.e. English is characterized by greater laxity and less movement of the articulator than most languages. Regarding the second area, that of SLA & pedagogy, most current research tries to explain the reasons for pronunciation achievement –i.e. due to age, motivation, aptitude, social attitudes, personality factors or even interference/lack of interference with students' L1.

A lot of attention is in fact devoted to the area of teaching pronunciation, since even if some learners are believed to improve pronunciation without specific instruction –i.e. young learners (Flege et al., 1999; Trofimovich and Baker, 2006 –cited in Dlaska and Krekeler, 2013), learners who receive a large amount of L2 input (Trofimovich and Baker, 2006 –cited in Dlaska and Krekeler, 2013), or very motivated learners with a high willingness to communicate (Derwing et al., 2007; Romova et al., 2008 –cited in Dlaska and Krekeler, 2013)–, there are strong arguments to believe that pronunciation instruction in the L2 should be part of the language teaching program as we have already seen –i.e. pronunciation teaching is supposed to have a positive effect on comprehensibility and intelligibility (De Bot and Mailfert, 1982; Couper, 2003, 2006; Derwing et al., 1997, 1998; Derwing and Rossiter, 2003; Murakawa, 1990; Pennington, 1998; Ramírez Verdugo, 2005, 2006; Romova et al., 2008; Saito and Lyster, 2012; Trofimovich et al., 2008 –all cited in Dlaska and Krekeler, 2013).

Nevertheless, before we get into practical issues there are some initial questions that we need to consider. Kelly (2000), for instance, believed that it was very important to distinguish between phonetics –divided into physiological phonetics, articulatory phonetics, acoustic phonetics, auditory phonetics, and perceptual phonetics– and phonology –which is the one that

actually interests us and which studies the systems and patterns of the sounds of each particular language–, as they are two separate fields of study within pronunciation that tend to be confused and mixed. Morley (1991), on the other hand, asked herself if pronunciation should be taught at all and if so, what things should be taught and how –i.e. do we need to instruct students in the three main components of pronunciation? She also wondered whether research in L2 phonology helped in classroom practices and whether changes in learner pronunciation should be further studied. In the same line, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) made themselves two questions: 1) what approach do we need to follow when teaching pronunciation? –i.e. selection of items to be taught–, and 2) what model should we use? –i.e. presentation of such items in the classroom. These authors also discussed about the importance of considering things on a teachability-learnability scale –i.e. there are certain things that students can learn without teacher intervention and others that are fairly easy to describe and generalize and that are therefore more teachable. Kenworthy (1987) was also concerned about the teacher's role and the learner's role regarding the teaching of pronunciation, which entailed helping students to perceive and make sounds, providing feedback, establishing priorities and choosing and designing activities to improve pronunciation in the case of teachers, and taking responsibility for their own learning in the case of students. Finally, Foote, Trofimovich, Collins and Soler Urzua (2013) believed that when talking about the efficacy of pronunciation instruction three main questions arouse: 1) is pronunciation teaching effective? ; 2) which is the learning objective –i.e. intelligibility vs. native-like pronunciation; and 3) how should pronunciation be taught?

When having a look at these initial questions, some issues seem to be recurrently addressed, namely those regarding the "what" and the "how" of teaching pronunciation. For that reason, we will try to provide some answers to them, basing ourselves on the literature in the field. Regarding the "what", it seems clear after all the information here provided that a comprehensive approach to the teaching of pronunciation should not only pay attention to the accurate production of phonemes as it was long believed, but also to the effective use of suprasegmentals. Regarding the "how", however, a myriad of possible answers arise.

A very interesting point of view is that of Morley (1991), who tried to discern the different dimensions of teaching pronunciation. According to her, pronunciation teaching could focus on six different aspects: 1) on the program philosophy; 2) on learner goals, standards and outcomes; 3) on learning dimensions and instructional objectives; 4) on the learner and learning involvement; 5) on the teacher and teacher involvement; and 6) on the instructional planning.

Regarding the first aspect, pronunciation is now considered part of the oral communication process, something which implies that we need to construct a dual-focus framework that combines a micro level (speech production) and macro level (speech performance). Pronunciation needs to be taught and assessed regarding speech production (i.e. the specific elements of pronunciation, such as the articulation of consonant and vowel sounds or the neutral vowel use) and speech performance (i.e. the general elements of oral communicability – segmental and suprasegmentals).

The second category sets out to discover what the reasonable and desirable goals for a pronunciation course are. As we previously anticipated, achieving a native-like pronunciation is very difficult (if not nearly impossible) and it may not actually be desired by learners –i.e. some learners may actually want to retain some features of their L1 pronunciation in order not to lose their identity. Moreover, if a native-like accent was the goal, what native model should we follow? Since a native-like model should not be the one followed, the ultimate aim should be that of intelligibility that we previously talked about. The author, in fact, proposed a speech intelligibility index in which she specified in detail what the different levels of intelligibility were – i.e. basically unintelligible, largely unintelligible, reasonably intelligible, largely intelligible, fully intelligible and “near native”.

As far as the third aspect is concerned, Morley (1991) distinguished three important dimensions of learning, namely intellectual involvement, affective involvement and physical or performative involvement. Intellectual involvement refers to the fact that students need to receive information for the development of speech-awareness and study-awareness –i.e. language and procedural information. Affective involvement, on the other hand, refers to the affective or psychological component of learning, which involves learner self-involvement –i.e. recognition of self-responsibility, development of self-monitoring skills, development of speech modification skills and recognition of self-accomplishment– and a comfortable, supportive classroom atmosphere, which in turn implies supportive teacher-student and student-student interactions. Finally, physical or performative involvement implies the fulfilment of different types of practice –i.e. pronunciation/speech practice, pronunciation-oriented listening practice and spelling-oriented pronunciation practice.

The fourth aspect of pronunciation teaching according to Morley (1991) has to do with the learner and his involvement in the learning process. The author suggested that the learner should be involved in the learning process by developing the following awareness and attitudes: speech awareness, self-awareness speech production features and speech performance, self-observation skills and a positive attitude toward self-monitoring processes, speech modification

skills, awareness of the learner role as one of a “speech performer” and the teacher role as a “speech coach”, a sense of personal responsibility for one’s own learning, a feeling of pride in one’s own accomplishments, and the building of a personal repertoire of speech monitoring and modification skills in order to continue to improve speaking effectiveness once the instructional program is finished.

Regarding the teacher and the teacher involvement, it must be pointed out that the teacher has two main roles in this learning process: 1) facilitating learning by supplying information, giving models from time to time, offering cues, suggestions and constructive feedback, providing a wide variety of practice opportunities, encouraging speech awareness and self-monitoring, and encouraging the learner; and 2) monitoring and guiding modification at two levels –i.e. speech production and speech performance.

Finally, focusing on instructional planning involves thinking about the specific techniques that we can use to learn and improve pronunciation. In this respect, Morley (1991) proposed three different types of practice, namely imitative practice, rehearsed practice and extemporaneous practice –the ultimate goal, which implies integrating modified speech into naturally occurring creative speech.

Morley (1991), nevertheless, was not the only one to provide some guidelines on how to teach pronunciation. Kelly (2000), for instance, discussed about the possible pronunciation models that could be taught and provided a list of techniques and activities that could be performed to improve pronunciation. Regarding the model to be followed, the author suggests that given the variety of pronunciation models available, the teacher could follow any model as long as he/she is aware of the one that is being used and as long as he/she is informed about the other varieties so that differences among varieties can be made and explained –in this case, the author does not aim at intelligibility, but he rather thinks of native-like model instead. Regarding the techniques and activities proposed, the author distinguishes between the two key sides of pronunciation teaching –i.e. the teaching of productive skills and of receptive skills–, and offers a list of possible techniques, in which he includes drilling, minimal pairs –words and utterances that differ by only one phoneme–, activities that link pronunciation and spelling work –i.e. using homographs (words that are spelled the same way but pronounced differently) and homophones (words that are pronounced the same way but that have different spellings)–, taping students’ performance –which can be used to observe problems or to compare students’ performance throughout the course–, listening activities –i.e. so that students can notice things about pronunciation and their use–, and reading activities –performed either by the teacher or

by the student to allow students make links between spelling and pronunciation, between stress and intonation or between sounds in different words.

Seidlhofer (2001), on the other hand, proposed a continuum of activity types for pronunciation teaching which ranged between "skill-getting" and "skill-using", from activities which focused on the language code to activities that were more communicative: 1) elicited mechanical production, which involves the manipulation of sound patterns with no specific purpose (no motivated choices of sounds or stress patterns); 2) listen and repeat activities, where learners imitate chunks of language provided by the teacher or a recording; 3) discrimination practice, in which the learners have to listen for sound contrasts; 4) activities with sounds for meaning contrasts; 5) cognitive analysis practice, which involves the explicit explanation and analysis of pronunciation patterns –i.e. training how sounds are articulated in the L2, teaching the phonemic script, giving specific rules of pronunciation, and comparing the L1 and the L2 sound systems among other things; 6) communication activities and games, where even if the focus is on communication, students can also practice pronunciation; 7) whole brain activities –i.e. activities to activate the right brain hemisphere, such as music or poetry; and 8) the teaching of learning strategies, which allows learners to control their development and keep learning on their own.

Some other authors, however, decided to provide techniques according to the different areas of pronunciation that were to be improved. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994), for example, provided a list of skills that students needed to exercise in order to master stress and intonation. In the case of stress, they suggested that students should know how to identify and produce stress –so teachers should explain the concept of stress and practice with students how stressed and unstressed syllables sound like–, as well to predict word stress –which teachers can exercise through providing students with the stress pattern of every new word that they encounter or through presenting the rules of stress to students. In the case of intonation, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) argued that even if it is difficult to find materials to teach intonation, teachers could always create and adapt their own materials –i.e. using any conversation to focus on different intonation patterns. Kenworthy (1987), on the other hand, proposed that learners should be first introduced to the different areas of interest within the field of pronunciation and then practice them through several activities –i.e. working on stress by saying peoples' names with different stress patterns, working on rhythm by using rhymes, verses and limericks, developing prominence by changing the stress of an utterance to mean different things, or developing intonation by using drama.

Even if most authors are concerned about how to teach pronunciation, another point of view that needs to be considered as well is that of Gilbert (2008), who stated that the teaching of pronunciation is full of challenges that need to be assumed and tackled. Teachers, for example, find it hard to find a time to teach pronunciation and when they do, they usually find it very boring or unrelated to students' immediate interests. In fact, it is not only Gilbert (2008) who assumes the current detrimental position of pronunciation in the EFL classroom, as many other authors have also pointed out this phenomenon (see Foote et al., 2013; Calvo Benzies, 2013; or Kelly, 2000). The question is now, is this actually true? And if so, why is it?

Foote et al. (2013) tried to analyse what teachers said on this respect and, according to the studies reviewed, pronunciation seemed to be usually integrated in their language classes – focusing both on segmentals and suprasegmentals. In the same line, Henderson, Frost et al. (2015) tried to know more about the teachers' practice regarding pronunciation through the English Pronunciation Teaching in Europe Survey (EPTiES). After asking them directly, they concluded that 79% of them devoted up to a quarter of their weekly teaching time to teaching pronunciation –mainly though ear training (using CDs, DVDs and even online resources) and phonetic symbols. Nevertheless, Henderson, Frost et al. (2015) further analysis of the EPTiES did not easily match these conclusions. The conclusions of this second study, indeed, reflected that even if teachers thought that teaching pronunciation was quite important, they were not prepared enough to teach it –they had either received no training on pronunciation at all or either no training in how to teach pronunciation.

Foote et al. (2013), in fact, decided to carry out a study to actually find out if what teachers said they were doing was actually matching reality. In order to do so, they decided to research the following aspects in three different EFL classrooms in Canada: 1) how often was pronunciation addressed?; 2) which aspects of pronunciation received more attention?; 3) how was pronunciation treated pedagogically. Regarding the first question, the authors of this study found out that focus on pronunciation accounted for only 10% of all language-related episodes, which meant that teachers devoted less time to pronunciation than they thought. Regarding the second aspect, results showed that teachers were mostly focusing on segmentals. Finally, the study also revealed that instruction consisted in corrective feedback (mainly recasts) most of the times.

On the other hand, Calvo Benzies (2013) tried to analyse what students thought about the role of pronunciation in their EFL classes, particularly in the case of Spain. In order to do so, she carried out a survey among 222 university students taking a BA in English studies. The results of this survey made her conclude the following: 1) the role of pronunciation in EFL

classes was insufficient –i.e. teachers did not devote enough time to pronunciation and when they did, they did in a monotonous and non-innovative way and they did not even test students afterwards; 2) students, however, showed positive attitudes towards the teaching and learning of English pronunciation; 3) changes needed to be introduced so that the teaching of pronunciation was truly introduced and effectively taught.

Particularly interesting are the innovative proposals that some authors suggest regarding this issue. Ducate and Lomicka (2009), for instance, designed a project in which students could work on their pronunciation using blogs and podcasts. Students had to record themselves carrying out a series of scripted and extemporaneous tasks that they would later upload to a blog. Results of this study did not show any significant improvements, although they did show the potential of using these new technologies for the development of pronunciation skills. Meanwhile, Tomé (2010) decided to develop a series of strategies and practices based on the web 2.0 to improve students' pronunciation. In order to do so, he analysed a series of web 2.0 resources being used to improve oral skills –namely audio recorders, podcasts, weblogs, social networks and online platforms– and he came to the conclusion that such tools and software not only matched the students' interests and aims, but also helped students receive corrective feedback beyond the teacher –something which could ultimately lead to self-correction.

3 AN INNOVATION PROJECT

3.1 What does innovation entail?

Nowadays, we live in an ever-changing world where citizens' needs are constantly fluctuating and evolving. Anyone would realize that the basic skills that a citizen needed to master in order to "survive" in this world before have completely changed in a matter of decades –even in a matter of years. Being this our reality, it is easy to understand that the aim of schools has gradually changed as well: now it is not only necessary that schools teach students how to read, do maths or know about the world around them, but it is also required that citizens familiarize with some other type of knowledge (i.e. deal with ICTs or achieve communication in a global world) and that they learn how to actively participate in their learning process (Carbonell, 2001).

However, even when education should be digesting all these new challenges and incorporating all the advances of research to move in that direction, there seems to be a disconnection between schools and students' realities, between teaching practice and research (Morales Vallejo, 2010). Why is education so resistant to change? Why is there such a breach between what research on the field of education proposes and what actually happens in the classroom?

Regarding the first question, we can assume that even if some members of the educational community see innovation as an impulse to find new ways to manage the classroom, there is still a widespread belief among teachers (and educational authorities) which seems to predominate: if it is working, why changing it? (Morales Vallejo, 2010).

On the other hand, in our country there is little tradition for teachers to be constantly updated about the new discoveries of research on the field, contrary to what happens in other fields such as medicine, where professionals always pay attention to what science has to say (Morales Vallejo, 2010). This leads us to look for an answer to our second question: why do teachers not pay attention to the discoveries and proposals of educational research? In the past twenty years, papers and journals on education have notoriously increased, with scholars being interested in not only deepening their knowledge of the field, but also in knowing how such knowledge is passed on to students by teachers –and yet many teachers seem not to know about or not to be interested in this great offer. Why is this so? A possible answer to this question can be found just by having a look at these studies and their characteristics: most research in the field nowadays is performed by university professors using their own students as participants –far from other lower education institutions– and, many times, driven by the emphasis on research that exists at university, being the focus on research per se, not on its

connection to teaching (Boyer, 1990 –cited in Morales Vallejo, 2010). Boyer (1990 –cited in Morales Vallejo, 2010) stated in his report Scholarship reconsidered: priorities of the professionate that the teaching practice in higher education institutions was in fact undervalued, something which led to a lack of interest in the scholarship of teaching, that is, the scholar dimension which is concerned about the excellence in teaching, the linking of teaching with research, the critical reflexion of the teaching practice and the presentation of results in the field so that they can be further accessed and reviewed.

There is therefore a need to promote a type of research which is embedded in the teaching process, which is directly linked to what is taught in the classroom. A type of research that is based on teachers' questions about how they teach and what students learn in order to improve such process. A type of research in which change does not remain in the surface of the problem, but in which change goes deep inside it. And one of the most suitable answers to this matter could be educational innovation.

However, before we start defining the type of innovation we want to introduce in this dissertation, we should first understand what the concept of innovation entails and what its key ingredients are.

If we analyse the origin of the term innovation, we may come to the conclusion that innovation involves "doing something new within a pre-existent reality" (Rivas Navarro, 2000). Nevertheless, in the education field the term "innovation" could be defined with more nuances. Ortega Cuenca et al. (2007), for example, specifies that innovation entails change but not any type of change –a change that involves improvement. This type of change or modification can be translated into the alteration of the very different elements defining the educational system, such as ideas and beliefs, materials, practices, contents, methods, cultural standards, roles or even administrative procedures (De la Torre, 1997; Rivas Navarro, 2000). Finally, this type of change needs to be appropriately consolidated so that it ultimately leads to personal and institutional growth (De la Torre, 1997). Taking all this into account, Carbonell (2001) provides a very interesting definition:

> [Innovation entails] a series of interventions, decisions and processes with a certain degree of internationalization and systematization that try to modify attitudes, ideas, cultures, contents, models and pedagogical practices. Moreover, they try to introduce, in a renovated fashion, new projects and programmes, curricular materials, teaching and learning strategies, didactic models and a different way of organizing and managing the syllabus, the school and the classroom dynamics.
> (Translated from Carbonell, 2001)

The term innovation tends to be confused with other concepts such as reform and renovation, which are sometimes presented as synonyms. Nevertheless, all authors revised agree that these terms refer to different realities. Reform, for example, involves a centralized impulse to broadly change the whole educational system, focused on its aims as well as on its structure and organization (De la Torre, 1997; Rivas Navarro, 2000). Reforms are usually moved by economic and social imperatives and, even if they usually set too high expectations, they are not always translated into innovation and improvement (Carbonell, 2001). Renovation, on the other hand, means substituting the old for the new and it can involve a change of ideas or a change in the syllabus and in the organizational structure. Nevertheless, as we previously anticipated, this type of change does not necessarily mean an improvement –i.e. modernizing a school has nothing to do with innovation. De la Torre (1997) goes further into these differentiation of terms and separates innovation in a broader sense from innovation experiences or experimental projects, which he defines as changes leading to improvement that are less complex, more sporadic and more specific regarding their aims. This type of innovation experiences could represent the first phase of a broader innovation project or even a humbler attempt to improve certain practices within the classroom –initiatives on a smaller scale. However, they should not be underestimated, as it is usually through them that the deepest changes in teachers' attitudes happen (De la Torre, 1997; Carbonell, 2001).

In order to further differentiate innovation from other similar concepts, some scholars have also provided us with a more in-detail list of its key ingredients. Carbonell (2001), for example, believes that innovation should describe personal experiences that acquire a particular meaning in practice with some of the following aims: 1) connecting different areas of knowledge in order to acquire a more elaborated and complex perspective of reality; 2) turning schools into more democratic, attractive, and stimulating places; 3) promoting theoretical reflection about the experiences and interactions in the classroom; 4) breaking the traditional division between conception and performance, between the expert who designs and knows everything and the teacher who merely applies what he/she is told to; 5) fostering pedagogical autonomy; 6) promoting a continuous re-thinking of education according to our changing realities; 7) translating ideas into everyday-life uses; 8) engaging in exchange and permanent cooperation; 9) making desires and hidden interests flourish among students; or 10) generating a constant source of intellectual agitation. Rivas Navarro (2000), on the other hand, specified that in order that change could be considered innovation it needed to be intentionally specified, delimited and developed. Nevertheless, he also remarked that such change did not have to entail a ground-breaking discovery in order to be called innovation, as purposefully introducing any new element in the system –either original or taken from any other context where it proved to be successful– was enough for a significant and sustained improvement to happen.

Another key element of innovation that is worth considering is the characters involved in the process. Rivas Navarro (2000), for instance, distinguished two main characters: 1) agents, who are the people that disseminate and encourage the adoption of innovation –i.e. experts in innovation, the principal, the head of studies, the head of the department; and 2) actors, who are the people that carry out the actual innovation –i.e. normally teachers. Ortega Cuenca et al. (2007), however, thought of innovation as a more complex process and, thus, talked about a wider variety of characters involved: they did not only talk about the promoters and the actual researchers, but also about the advisors –people who may not be directly involved in the innovation process but who may be able to help given their experience or knowledge (i.e. scholars)–, the potential observers –people who register and analyse the process and who are not necessarily the researcher–, and the participants, without whom innovation could not be put into practice.

Finally, it is also very important to understand that all innovations are not of the same type. Traditionally, categorization has varied from one author to the other: even if one of the most classical divisions was that of organizational vs. didactic innovation, some scholars had also proposed longer lists. Ducros and Finkelstein (1992 –cited in Rivas Navarro, 2000), for example, proposed four types of innovation (innovation of the curriculum, of the method, of the structures and of the relationships), while Miles (1973 –cited in Rivas Navarro, 2000) and Marklund (1974 –cited in Rivas Navarro) proposed three (innovation of objectives, of structures and of processes of the system vs. innovation of structures, of objectives and contents, syllabus and timetables, and of methods). Nevertheless, we will stick to Rivas Navarro's (2000) framework, a multidimensional approach which categorizes innovation depending on different aspects: 1) the component of the educational system that it principally affects; 2) the degree of intensity of changes; 3) the way in which changes are produced; or 4) the amount of elements of the system involved.

Regarding the components of the educational system affected, innovation can be of eleven types: a) innovation in the transactions for the maintenance of the limits of the system –i.e. definition of the guiding principles of the institution; b) innovation regarding the size and the extension –i.e. modification of the teacher-student ratio; c) innovation in the school premises –i.e. ways of structuring and using school spaces; d) innovation regarding timing –i.e. duration of classes; e) innovation regarding teaching objectives; f) innovation regarding procedures –i.e. didactic procedures, procedures to structures the classroom and so on; g) innovation in the definition of roles within the institution; h) innovation regarding values, ideas and beliefs; i) innovation regarding the structure and relationship among parties; j) innovation regarding the

socialization methods –i.e. integration of students and staff; and k) innovation regarding the connection among systems –i.e. relationship between the institution and its immediate context.

Concerning the way of doing innovation, Rivas Navarro (2000) used Havelock and Guskin's (1973) categories, which include addition –adding something new without altering the rest of the elements of the system–, reinforcement –intensifying or consolidating something already existent–, removal –of elements, of behaviour, of old habits–, substitution –replacing one element by another–, alteration –modifying an structure without ceasing to exist–, and restructuring –reorganization that affects the structure of the system.

As far as the intensity of change is concerned, Rivas Navarro (2000) resorted to McMullen (s.d.), dividing innovation into three categories: a) marginal innovation, in which the role of the teacher is not modified, but small improvements are introduced; b) additional innovation, in which there is no modification of the role of the teacher, but a change in their methods instead; and c) fundamental innovation, which intend to change the role of the teacher and which imply great changes. This last type would be the most optimal type of change, but it takes a long time and, therefore, it is less frequent.

Finally, regarding the amount of elements of the system involved, innovation could be divided between institutional –involving all members of the institution– and partial–only involving a teacher or a group of teachers (Rivas Navarro, 2000).

3.2 Designing an innovation project

In this dissertation, our proposal revolves around the design of an innovation project as a likely answer to the current improvement needs of our educational system regarding EFL. For that reason, and before we start describing such proposal, we are going to briefly explain how a project like this one should be.

First of all, we must make sure that the content of our proposal meets the criteria that characterize educational innovation projects. In this respect, it is particularly interesting to revise Ortega Cuenca et al.'s (2007) work, in which they suggest that any innovation project should have the following qualities: 1) novelty, because innovation, as we previously anticipated, has to introduce something new; 2) purpose, as innovation has to deliberately promote an improvement; 3) interiorization, as innovation implies the acceptation and appropriation of change by the people involved; 4) creativity, because innovation must be subject to innovation within itself; 5) systematization, since innovation is a planned and systematic action that

involves evaluation and reflection processes about practice and innovation itself; 6) depth, given that innovation should entail a true transformation, a true revolution; 7) pertinence, because innovation must be the solution to a problem in a given socio-educational context; 8) result-oriented, as innovation is not an end but rather a means-to-an-end; 9) permanence, since innovation must be implemented for enough time for it to become a "normal" practice; 10) anticipation, given that it must clearly glimpse the characteristics of the desired future situation; 11) culture, as its aim must be to transform the educational culture; and 12) diversity of agents, because when there is a diversity of agents, there is a wider perspective when trying to deal with problems.

Once these key characteristics are clear, it is also worth considering the factors which may affect the efficiency of the project –as it is only through being aware of them that we can attempt to control them. Carbonell (2001), for instance, believes that innovation is promoted –and thus is more likely to be successful–On the contrary, innovation can be obstructed according to Carbonell (2001) when there is a resistance and a tendency to follow the same routines among teachers, when individualism and internal corporate spirit prevail at school, when teacher discontent and pessimism are generalized, when general education reforms have a perverse effect at institutions, when there is a double syllabus –one focused on passing tests and another one on learning in a more innovative way those contents that are "less important" –, or when there is a disconnection between university research and teaching practice.

Finally, we must perfectly understand which stages or phases should integrate a project like this one in order to perfectly plan it and carry it out. Historically, there have been many proposals which make an emphasis on certain aspects of innovation over others. Fullan (1982 –cited in De la Torre, 1997), for example, believed that innovation should go through the following five phases: planning, dissemination, adaptation or adoption, application and assessment. Havelock (1973) and Morrish (1978), on the other hand, described five different stages in an innovation project, namely awareness of innovation, interest in the problem, assessment of the appropriateness of innovation, trial and adoption for a permanent use (De la Torre, 1997). Holly (1990 –cited in De la Torre, 1997), however, believed that innovation should have the following six stages: analysis of the problem, collection of data, conceptualization, planning of the action program, implementation and assessment.

As there are as many proposals as authors talking about this issue, we have decided to stick to a more general model based on De la Torre's (1997) own framework, which devises three general stages: rationale of innovation, implementation and assessment.

The first stage, which represents an initial approach to our innovation proposal, could include Ortega Cuenta et al.'s (2007) phases of:

1) Understanding the innovation process; that is, collecting information about the situation and the needs we have.
2) Asking ourselves questions about how innovation is going to be perceived in order to determine future success –i.e. what is the attitude towards innovation of people involved in the project? Are people involved able to cause change?
3) Performing basic actions, such as identifying characters participating, defining their roles, describing aspects that will be modified or establishing what information will be necessary.
4) Understanding all this initial information.
5) Establishing aims and solutions –i.e. establishing priorities or visualizing the situation.

This first stage could be compared with Fullan's (1982 –cited in De la Torre, 1997) planning phase, with Havelock (1973) and Morrish' (1978) first two categories –awareness of innovation and interest in the problem–, or with Holly's (1990 –cited in De la Torre, 1997) first three stages –analysis of the problem, collection and conceptualization.

The second phase, which entails the implementation of the innovation proposal, could be divided in two areas according to Loucks (1985 –cited in De la Torre, 1997): preparing implementation and implementing per se. The first sub-stage would include the development of materials/method, the assessment of appropriateness to the context or the planning of an action program. On the other hand, the second sub-stage would entail what Ortega Cuenca et al. (2007) described as the exploitation of the plan or what authors cited by De la Torre (1997) defined as application or trial.

Finally, the last stage, that of assessment, would include not only checking how implementation went –evaluating indicators of every component that we have measured (Ortega Cuenca et al., 2007)–, but also and ideally monitoring its institutionalization –that is, checking if change is effectively managed (Ortega Cuenca et al., 2007), aiming at the integration of innovation in the system and at the ultimate transformation of the system (Rivas Navarro, 2000) and aiming at subsequent revisions and improvements so that innovation prevails in time. This phase would also include the dissemination of results in the right forums so that such revisions and improvements can also come from beyond the classroom, from beyond the institution.

3.3 Our project –an innovation experience

3.3.1 Rationale and appropriateness of this project

Taking into consideration the communicative demands of our current global world and the observed detrimental position of our population when it comes to EFL and the mastering of oral skills in this language, we have decided to make a small-scale contribution to deal with this matter. As a result, our proposal consists on an innovation project which intends to modify this tendency by introducing new materials and new tasks in the EFL classroom, because, as we previously anticipated, materials are one of the key elements that interact in the classroom (Alwright, 1981 –cited in Hutchinson and Torres, 1994), they are easily controllable and, in our opinion, they have the potential to drive change from the bottom of the system.

Our innovation project could be described as what De la Torre (1997) called "an innovation experience", since it is a project with very specific aims and which involves simple changes –it is a small-scale attempt to improve the way in which oral skills are taught in the EFL classroom, mainly focusing on the materials and tasks provided to students. Nevertheless, it should not be underestimated just because it fosters small changes. As Carbonell (2001) says, most successful innovation originates in the classroom and, from there, it can easily go upwards in the system. Moreover, and in the same line, this project could be considered the first phase of a broader and more comprehensive innovation project, as the successful implementation of innovative materials and tasks to foster a different model of developing EFL students' oral skills could eventually trigger a change of roles at school –and that would entail a multidimensional approach to this matter, leading to a true revolution.

Following Rivas Navarro's (2000) framework, our innovative project could be also considered an innovation of procedures if we look at the components affected –in this case, an innovation regarding the use materials and didactic instruments as a support for the development of content. This type of innovation, however, results incidentally in the innovation of other components of education as we have already anticipated –i.e. the innovation of teaching objectives, as our materials and tasks have the potential to place communication as one of the most important priorities in the classroom, or the ultimate innovation of roles, as materials and tasks can eventually turn a teacher-centred classroom into a learner-centred one.

Regarding the way of doing innovation, our project could be classified as one where there is addition and alteration (Rivas Navarro, 2000), that is, one where we add something new (materials and tasks) in order that they do not fully substitute the existing ones (i.e. textbooks)

but that they change or alter the role of the latter (i.e. textbooks are moved to a less important position, where they no longer control contents to be studied, the pace of the classroom or the method to be implemented).

Finally, regarding the intensity of change this one could be considered an additional innovation (Rivas Navarro, 2000) as, through the change of materials, it entails a relevant change in the method, although not a change of roles straight away. This, however, could eventually lead to a restructuration of the system and a restructuration of such roles in more advanced stages –provided that this initial innovation project, considered partial because it only involves a teacher/group of teachers, became institutionalized and involved all members of the educational community.

Now that we have appropriately categorized what type of innovation our project presents, there seems to be however the need to justify why this project can be called "innovative", whether it complies with the criteria of a truly innovative project. In that respect, we can begin by stating that this project introduces some type of novelty, even if it cannot be seen straight away. Some people may argue that the use of authentic materials and ICTs in the classroom is not new, but what is new in this case is their application as an integrated element of the syllabus. This project can also be appropriately called innovative given that it is purposeful, result-oriented and pertinent. As we previously saw on chapter 2.1, Spaniards seem to have more trouble when learning foreign languages than some of their European counterparts, something which is especially true regarding the development of oral skills. For that reason, the aim of this project is to tackle this situation and to offer a way to improve the teaching of oral skills in Spanish EFL classrooms, with materials and tasks proposed being just a mere instrument for that purpose, and not a mean in itself. This, in fact, leads us to stating that our project also portrays a certain degree of depth, as we not only state that we must use ICTs and authentic materials –we actually propose how to naturally integrate these elements in the EFL classroom and we give some examples of use for teachers to inspire themselves. The fact that our proposal is a source of inspiration for teachers is also connected to another key characteristic of any innovative proposal: that of aiming at the interiorization of change among people involved. If teachers like what they see and eventually feel encouraged to use this kind of resources because they stop seeing them as threatening, they may discard their stagnant beliefs and embrace change. Another interesting element of this project is its diversity of agents involved, as it not only involves university members –us researchers¬–, but it also involves school members –teachers and school learners. This, in fact, solves the typical problem of disconnection between research and teaching practice, as research is done for the improvement of the latter and, as a result, teachers and students are directly involved. This

project can also be considered to comply with the criteria of systematization, as our project has been carefully planned and it involves evaluation and reflection, leading to the ultimate goal of further innovation, with activities and resources subject to being reviewed and modified in the future. Finally, we can also state that this project could potentially lead to permanence and transformation of the educational culture in the future, as we have already discussed that a successful implementation could trigger much bigger changes.

Regarding the phases that any innovative project should have, we can assert that our proposal complies with at least the majority of them. As far as the first approach to it is concerned, this project departs from an initial needs analysis in which we realize what the problem is –Spanish EFL students need to boost their EFL oral skills if they want to be communicatively competent in our current globalized world–, and it is followed by an identification of key elements involved and a thorough revision of relevant literature in order to envision a possible solution. The implementation phase, on the other hand, could be divided in two sub-stages: one where we devise how change is to be implemented and one where we actually put it to practice as some sort of trial. In this project, however, we have decided to put more emphasis on the first sub-stage –that is, in the selection of materials, activities and a suitable method to accompany them and in the planning of a potential action program–, as it is only this way we leave an open door for further replication or adoption. Nevertheless, we can also find a small scale pilot study to test if our initial assumptions could be potentially fulfilled in a more extensive implementation project. Finally, regarding the assessment phase, this project only assesses the results of the aforementioned pilot study, as this is as far as we are going to get in this dissertation. However, a monitoring of its potential institutionalization could be a very interesting area for future research.

3.3.2 Our method

After revising all the existing methods which have been relevant over the past centuries, it is common that teachers feel lost when trying to decide which method they should use in a particular classroom context. It is well-known that some methods are considered outdated or even somewhat incomplete, something which could directly lead teachers to the most recent and trendy approaches. However, it would be too simplistic to discard the contributions of all the other methods altogether as if they had no interesting points of view to offer.

In fact, Hall (2011) argues that nowadays there is no such thing as a “best method”, as all methods could be more or less plausible depending on the context they are applied in. Particularly interesting is the concept of “plausibility” introduced above, which is supposed to

currently guide teachers practice and which could be defined as “a personal conceptualization of how their teaching [that of a particular teacher] leads to desire learning” (Prabhu, 1990:172 –cited in Hall, 2011). This could be translated into the following statement: that all methodological principles may be realized in different ways by different teachers, and that elements from different methods could be mixed and blended.

Taking all this into account, it is understandable that some applied linguists have begun to talk about “the death of the method” (Alwright, 1991–cited in Hall, 2011) or the “postmethod condition” (Kumaravadivelu, 1994), which could be defined as a principled pragmatism –“how classroom learning can be shaped and managed by teachers as a result of informed teaching and critical appraising” (p. 31). Kumaravadivelu (2006 –cited in Hall, 2011) states that this new approach relies on three principles: 1) particularity, as teachers act in a context-sensitive, location-specific manner, recognizing the social, linguistic and cultural background of learners; 2) practicality, through which the superiority of theorists is broken and through which teachers are empowered to theorize from their own practices and put into practice their own theories; and 3) possibility, which entails that the socio-political consciousness of learners is addressed in the classroom as a catalyst for identity formation and social transformation. In other words, the postmethod condition makes us redefine the relationship between theorizers and practitioners and signifies teacher autonomy, “as it recognizes the teachers’ potential to teach/act autonomously within the [existing] academic and administrative constraints […], and as it promotes the ability of teachers to know how to develop a reflective approach to their own teaching, how to analyse and evaluate their own teaching practice, how to initiate change in their classroom, and how to monitor such changes” (Kumaravadivelu, 1994:30) –something which is in line with the empowerment of the teacher and of the teaching practice that we introduced before.

Considering this new approach to method selection, a myriad of possible frameworks for L2 teaching opens up. Particularly interesting is the framework proposed by Kumaravadivelu (1994) himself, who believes that teachers can design their own method as long as it is based on a series of macrostategies –“general plans derived from theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical knowledge related to L2 learning/teaching” (p.32)– and microstategies or specific plans for the classroom, which make macrostategies operational. Such macrostrategies consist on: 1) maximizing learning opportunities –planning lessons to create effective learning opportunities and working with learning opportunities created by students; 2) facilitating negotiated interaction –i.e. designing group activities, asking referential questions rather than display questions, allowing students to self-initiate topics and so on; 3) minimizing perceptual mismatches between teacher interaction and learner interpretation; 4) activating intuitive

heuristics –providing students with enough textual data so that they can infer certain underlying grammatical rules; 5) fostering language awareness, that is "the attempt to draw learners' attention to the formal properties of their L2 in order to increase the degree of explicitness required to promote L2 learning" (p.37); 6) contextualizing linguistic input and drawing learners' attention to the integrated nature of learning; 7) integrating language skills, as they are interrelated and mutually reinforcing; 8) promoting learner autonomy –i.e. helping students learn how to learn or raising awareness of successful learning strategies; 9) raising cultural consciousness; and 10) ensuring social relevance, that is, the "need for teachers to be sensitive to the societal, political, economic, and educational environment in which L2 learning/teaching takes place" (p.42). According to Kumaravadivelu (1994), this framework can be used to turn classroom practitioners into strategic teachers and strategic researchers who reflect on the specific needs of learning and teaching, who are willing to stretch their knowledge and explore macrostrategies to meet the challenges of the changing contexts of teaching, and who are able to design microstrategies accordingly to maximize learning potential in the classroom, developing on the other hand the investigative capabilities required for action research –which, in turn, helps teachers improve their own practice and reinforce their own theoretical values of language pedagogy.

Having all these considerations in mind, we have aimed to present our innovation project within an eclectic communicative approach which not only adapts better to the reality of the Spanish system, but which also takes the most of the most recent adaptations of the communicative approach together with some interesting points of views from other methods, such as the task-based approach.

In order to start shaping this method, we should first familiarize with the most interesting contributions of several renovated CLT approaches. Particularly interesting is the proposal of Canale and Swain (1980), who decided to revise all the principles of the "communicative approaches" in order to select the contents and boundaries of an "ideal" communicative competence. Thus, these authors analysed the weakest and the strongest areas of the different theories of communicative competence –i.e. sociolinguistic perspectives or integrative theories– so that they could later formulate an adequate theory of communicative competence. This theory relied on a series of principles, namely: 1) that communicative competence was composed of grammatical, sociolinguistic and communicative/strategic competence and that all of these competences should have an equal importance; 2) that a communicative approach should be based on and respond to the learners' communication needs regarding the three levels of competence previously mentioned; 3) that L2 learners should have the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative interaction ; 4) that students should transfer the aspects

of communicative competence that they had previously developed through the acquisition and use of their L1; and 5) that the main objective of a communication-oriented L2 program was to provide learners with the information, practice and experience needed to meet their communicative needs in the L2. Based on these principles, the authors proposed a theoretical framework for communicative competence which relied on the development of the three competencies mentioned above: 1) grammatical competence –knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology; 2) sociolinguistic competence –composed by sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse, such as cohesion and competence; and 3) strategic competence –verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used to compensate for breakdowns in communication. Such a theoretical framework should have various implications in the language classroom –for example, that a functionally organized syllabus should be implemented, that classroom activities should reflect communicative activities that learners could engage in henceforth, that the teacher's role should change into that of an instigator of meaningful communication situations, or that textbooks should be left aside as long as they were not adapted to the students' real needs.

It is also worth mentioning the "principled communicative approach" proposed by Dörnyei (2013), which suggests some renovations in the line with those put forward by Canale and Swain (1980) and which achieves to revitalize CLT in the light of the contemporary academic advances. According to this author, one of the main drawbacks of this method was the vagueness of one of its moto: that of seeking for situational meaning. Such vagueness led to very different interpretations of this statement, making some scholars believe that CLT was a strictly-no-grammar approach and that explicit learning had no room in the CLT classroom. However, Dörnyei (2013), as well as Canale and Swain (1980), believed that implicit learning alone is not enough. In fact, after analysing some of the research in the field, he came to the conclusion that a mere exposure to the language together with communicative practice did not lead to the achievement of L2 proficiency and that explicit teaching procedures should be introduced in the classroom as well.

> In sum, we believe that CLT has arrived at a turning point: explicit, direct elements are gaining significance in teaching communicative abilities and skills. The emerging new approach can be described as a principled communicative approach; by bridging the gap between current research on aspects of communicative competence and actual communicative practice, this approach has the potential to synthesize direct, knowledge-oriented and indirect, skill-oriented teaching approaches. Therefore, rather than being a complete departure from the original, indirect practice of CLT, it extends and further develops CLT methodology.
> (Celce-Murcia et al. 1997:147-8 –cited in Dörnyei, 2013:165).

Taking all these ideas into account, Dörnyei (2013) then proposed a series of key guiding principles for his new Principled Communicative Approach (PCA), which we here summarize (adapted from Dörnyei, 2013):

- Personal significance principle: PCA has to be meaning-focused and personally significant.
- Controlled practice principle: controlled practice activities promote automatization of L2 skills.
- Declarative input principle: to reach automatization, we need to have some initial explicit input.
- Focus-on-form principle: while maintaining an overall meaning-oriented approach, PCA should also pay attention to formal/structural aspects of the L2 (accuracy and appropriateness at the linguistic, discourse and pragmatic levels). We should try to get an optimal balance between explicit and implicit learning, administering meaning-based and form-based tasks.
- Formulaic language principle: PCA has to include the teaching (and repeated practice) of formulaic language. We should make emphasis on its importance in real-life communication.
- Language exposure principle: PCA should offer learners extensive exposure to large amounts of L2 input. Learners, however, should be given some explicit preparation (pre-task activities) to aim at maximum intake.
- Focused interaction principle: PCA should offer learners a lot of opportunities for genuine L2 interaction. Communicative practice should have a formal or functional focus and should be associated with target phrases to practice.

With Dörnyei (2013) and Canale and Swain's (1980) proposals in mind, we believed that the most ideal method for a L2 classroom should combine explicit and implicit learning, focus on form and focus on meaning, the promotion of grammatical competence as well as the promotion of sociolinguistic and strategic competence. Such a method would also comply with Kumaravadivelu's (1994) macrostrategies of an appropriate framework for L2 learning –i.e. fostering negotiated interaction and activating intuitive heuristics but yet promoting language awareness at the same time, focusing on communicative and sociolinguistic skills but yet not forgetting about the integrated nature of learning. Nevertheless, if we think about the current situation in most of the L2 classrooms across Spain, we realize that the problem is an over-abuse of explicit teaching, of focus-on-form training, of the grammatical competence. There is little space left to addressing students' communicative needs and Dörnyei's (2013) principles of

personal significance, focus-on-meaning, language exposure and focused interaction tend to be completely forgotten.

As Canale and Swain (1980) said, in order that a fully communicative approach is enforced, all three types of knowledge must be evenly taught– grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence–, and that is something which we cannot see in most Spanish classrooms. We must remember how Morales Gálvez et al. (2000) came to the conclusion that teachers still believed that grammar and vocabulary were the most important contents within the syllabus. These authors also concluded that a truly communicative approach must provide learners with the information, practice and experience needed to meet their communicative needs in the L2 –and yet we see how the ones who design syllabuses are usually those that are more distant from the classroom reality (Carbonell, 2001). Furthermore, these authors believe that an appropriate communicative approach must provide learners with the opportunity to take part in meaningful interaction –and, however, Morales Gálvez at al. (2000) concluded that learners were not usually encouraged to use the foreign language in the classroom, let alone use it in meaningful contexts. If we also add to this situation the dominance of textbooks in the Spanish school, something which perpetuates the system and does not leave any room for teachers to introduce any changes, the message for us to read becomes crystal clear: we need to lay emphasis on the development of the sociolinguistic and strategic competence, trying to prepare students for those real communicative situations they may have to face in the future and creating the right contexts and situations for that purpose –even if that means forgetting, only for this time, about grammar, vocabulary or any other elements of a focus-on-form approach.

For that reason, and even if we believe that a more comprehensive CLT approach such as the ones here presented would be the ideal method for an average L2 classroom, the method we have based our innovative proposal on highlights the focus-on-meaning approach in order to compensate such trends in most Spanish L2 classrooms. With this, we do not imply that we want teachers to stop teaching certain contents in an explicit way or to focus on form: we just want teachers to realize how working with another model is not only possible but desirable.

The result is therefore a purely focus-on-meaning approach which intends to allow students to practice all those things they have explicitly learnt so far, while acquiring some new L2 knowledge in an implicit way, through the mere exposure to the language in relevant or interesting situations/contexts. We have also tried to blend this communicative approach with a task-based approach, as tasks have been at the centre of our method. In that respect, our method could very well resemble that definition of the TBL approach provided to us by Willis

and Willis (2004), as it was based on a sequence of communicative tasks (instead of language items) where students comprehend, manipulate, produce or interact in the L2 and where the focus is on meaning rather than on form. These tasks, as in the TBL approach, are carefully selected, sequenced and organized in an informed manner and, in our case, they all follow Nunan's (1989) criteria for the design of effective communicative tasks: 1) they contain carefully selected input data which is mainly extracted from authentic materials; 2) these tasks derive into an activity which effectively uses such input (recreating real-life activities, promoting the acquisition and use of skills or fostering accuracy and fluency); 3) they have a clear goal which connects the task and the syllabus; 3) they specify the role of the teacher and the role of the learner, changing the balance of power in the learners' direction; and 4) they clearly define the setting of the task (mode and environment).

With such a method, where students regain their space to communicate, where they get access to more relevant input and more motivating materials, where they leave behind those teacher-centred lessons and where, most importantly, they feel free to express themselves in a non-intimidating atmosphere, we intend to shift the tendencies in the L2 classroom and restore the balance that should have never disappeared. And in our case, this change will be also driven by the introduction of ICTs and authentic materials in the classroom, as these resources can perfectly fit our method and our way of understanding SLA in the 21st Century.

3.3.3 Materials

3.3.3.1 The significance of using videos and blogs & podcasts in the classroom

3.3.3.1.1 Videos

One of the most traditional materials in the EFL classroom is the video. Videos, which were introduced at school with the arrival of the early video player and their complementing television sets, have been always considered a motivating and interesting material for students, as they managed to break the routine of traditionally teacher-centred classrooms revolving around a textbook and the blackboard. Nevertheless, their use has been mostly peripheral –videos were merely used for special occasions– and quite unmotivated –using videos was many times justified as mere entertainment for students, with no real connection with the syllabus and no expected learning outcomes (Hobbs, 2006). We could only see their relevance within the audiovisual method, a method long discarded given the assumption that a mere exposure to the language was not enough –even if it was accompanied by contextualized images (Stern, 1983).

In order to start analysing the potential of videos in the EFL classroom, we should first start by appropriately defining what they are. Particularly interesting is the definition provided by Cross (2011), which manages to capture all the elements involved in this type of material:

> [A] multimodal text consisting of contiguous, dynamic, and interwoven sounds (verbal, musical and/or background) and visual images (still, moving, text and/or graphic) which can be presented using a range of media (p.45).

One of the downsides which is traditionally associated to the use of videos in the EFL classroom is its challenging nature (Gruba, 2006; Wagner, 2007; Suvorov, 2009; Li, 2012), as processing audio and images at the same time could be seen as a demanding task and images could be considered a distraction for learners. Nevertheless, most research on the field shows that, even if it were so, the positive aspects of using videos in the EFL classroom outnumber their possible limitations. Many authors have in fact highlighted the many benefits of such a resource, praising it for its sociocultural, linguistic and educational values (Cross, 2011). Videos are therefore seen as a more close-to-reality source of input which increase situational and interactional authenticity (Burt, 1999; Shrosbee, 2008; Suvorov, 2009), which are appealing and motivating for students (Burt, 1999; Godwin-Jones, 2011), and which provide the learner with not only verbal, but also non-verbal information which can assist them in the processing and comprehension of aural input (Burt, 1999; Sueyoshi and Hardison, 2005; Shrosbee, 2008; Suvorov, 2009; Cross, 2011).

In this line, some scholars have focused on the importance of context visuals and gestures. Suvorov (2009), for example, tried to investigate the effect of context visuals in students' listening comprehension performance and he came to the conclusion that, even if they did not seem to have a big impact on students' comprehension, students preferred to have access to them –maybe because their anxiety levels were reduced when they did. Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005), on the other hand, analysed the role of gestures and facial cues on second language listening comprehension, trying to provide a comprehensive list of their uses and meanings. According to the literature reviewed by these authors, gestures and facial cues could assist in the comprehension of the message not only to the listener, but also to the speaker, and could be used for very different purposes –i.e. from controlling the pace of speech to indicating the language development degree. Nevertheless, these authors wanted to test if the potential of these elements was in fact effective. For that reason, they carried out a study to specifically assess the contribution of gestures and facial cues to listening comprehension and they came to the conclusion that students not only preferred to have access to them, but they also scored better when they did –compared to when they had access to only-audio formats. Finally, Wagner (2007) assumed the importance of getting to see the speaker in order to provide

learners with a context and with hints from non-verbal communication, showing that learners did in fact interact with videotexts making use of such contextual cues and non-verbal components to assist their comprehension process.

Now that we have assumed that videos are a very powerful resource to be used in the EFL classroom, we should revise which types of videos we could work with. A first possible way to classify them could be paying attention to their aim or potential use. Shrosbee (2008), for example, proposed the use of videos as a productive task rather than as receptive task. In this line, he suggested that there were three types of videos that could be produced in a language classroom for learning purposes: 1) Assessment videos –videos where students carried out conversations which could be later analysed and assessed by the teacher; 2) Teacher-made videos –videos recorded or remixed by the teacher where he/she could specifically address students' specific needs; 3) Student-made videos –videos or even audios generated by students which allow them to produce a lot of output in a motivating context. Godwin-Jones (2011), on the other hand, argued that if videos are effectively presented to students, they could have the potential to develop not only their listening comprehension skill –which is the one we usually think of when talking about videos–, but also some other skills such as writing, speaking, vocabulary development or even cultural awareness. In order to prove his point, he analysed the potential use of some of the latest ICT resources which involve the use of videos, such as videoconferencing, storytelling or embedded videos, showing how they could be effectively adapted for pedagogical purposes. Finally, we should not forget the proposal of Progosh (1996), who believed that if videos could be used as a learning resource, they could also be used as a tool for language assessment. In fact, his research showed that students liked the idea of using videos for listening comprehension assessment, especially when given the choice between only-audio and video tests.

Nevertheless, the most important classification of videos which tends to be at the centre of discussions in the field is that of authentic vs. instructional videos. Burt (1999) tried to see the advantages of using both types of videos, arguing that instructional videos fulfilled the adequate learning criteria for language, content and length and that they were usually part of multimedia packages, while authentic videos could be praised for presenting real language, for providing a realistic view on English-speaking countries and for being attractive and motivating. King (2002), on the contrary, stated that even if videos in general were a much more dynamic medium than static text or sound-only audios, not all videos managed to have the desired learning potential, especially those explicitly designed for the EFL classroom –i.e. standard teaching materials lack a realistic and meaningful context and fail to deal with contemporary issues that are relevant to students' lives. For that reason, she presented authentic videos –and

more specifically feature films– as the ultimate resource, since they were more motivating for students and since they provided a wealth of contextualized linguistic, paralinguistic and authentic cross-cultural information, of classroom listening comprehension and of fluency practice. In the same line, Sherman (2003) focused on the potential of authentic videos, talking about the possible ways to use full-length films in the language classroom, which seem to be varied –i.e. as the main resource for a presentation, as the basis for language analysis, or as a source of listening, writing or speaking tasks– and multipurpose –as we have seen, authentic videos can be used to practice a wide range of skills.

With such a comparison, authentic videos could stand out as the preferred option, as they seem to have a more powerful learning potential to be exploited. However, this should be assumed cautiously, since the mere use of authentic videos does not automatically lead to the aforementioned learning outcomes. Burt (1999), for instance, believed that teachers should select videos basing themselves on a series of criteria, namely that of interest/motivation (is the video motivating enough for students?), content (instructional and culturally appropriate content), clarity of instructional message, pacing, relevant graphics, length of sequence, independence of sequence (can the segment be followed and understood without knowing the full context of the series/film?), availability and quality of related materials and use of the video within the lesson (what use do we give to the video? Is it appropriately integrated with the rest of tasks which are going to be carried out as well?). King (2002) also believed that authentic videos should be chosen for their educational value and she proposed a list of things to be taken into account when selecting a movie/scene as well: that scenes balanced dialogue with a high degree of visual support, appropriate speech delivery, clear picture and sound, and standard accent, that they contained an appropriate content, that they were appealing for students –i.e. age and culture appropriate, recent and box office movies–, or that, once more, they were accompanied by a series of well-structured tasks which could promote active viewing and stimulate students' involvement.

Another way of ensuring that authentic videos used in the classroom are accessible and appropriate for our students, no matter the level, is by providing them with a series of aid options. On the one hand, Li (2012) proposed the use of advanced organizers –i.e. providing background knowledge or information through question previewing or vocabulary pre-teaching for instance– which, according to the results of her study, were proved to have a facilitative role in the comprehension of authentic videos:

> Through the use of advance organizers in a multimedia setting, the intermediate EFL students' prior knowledge would be activated and integrated into their working memory in the process of the aural input and their listening comprehension would be substantially enhanced (p.285).

On the other hand, some other authors such as Grgurovic and Hegelheimer (2007) believed that the best way to help students when interacting with authentic videos was by giving them facilitating tools while on-task –and the most popular aid tools were transcripts and subtitles/captions. These two forms of textual repetition seem be quite similar, since both involve the provision of the written version of a text pared with its audiovisual version. However, as the research of these authors has shown, choosing one or another has different effects on the comprehension of students, with subtitles/captions standing out as the preferred aid option.

We will therefore analyse in depth all the ins and outs of this aid option, which seems to be a crucial ingredient of any task that involves the reproduction of videos for learning purposes. The first thing we need to clarify is the difference between captions and subtitles, terms which are commonly confused and exchanged. This confusion could originate from the myriad of definitions of these terms which can be found in the literature of the field, definitions that sometimes change tremendously and that even overlap concepts. In order to avoid controversy and confusion in this dissertation, we will therefore stick to the terminology of King (2002 –cited in Gorjian, 2014), which defines captions as the transcription of the conversation together with the description/transcription of other elements of the video –i.e. music, information displayed on screen and so on–, and subtitles as the transcription/translation of the mere words articulated by the speakers.

Now that concepts are clear, we will thus focus on the use of subtitles, which are more useful for language learning than captioning. Subtitles have not been always considered an appropriate resource to be used in language classrooms, as they have been suspected to be a source of distraction for learners (Danan, 2004; Winke, Gass and Sydorenko, 2010) and a way of neglecting the listening skill (Gorjian, 2014). Nevertheless, literature on the field has shown that, contrary to these beliefs, the use of subtitles has more advantages than disadvantages, especially when students get used to working with them (Winke et al., 2010). Subtitles, for example, have been reported to help students improve their listening comprehension skills, as they facilitate students' comprehension (Danan, 2004; Taylor, 2005; Hayati and Mohamedi, 2011), improve students' ability to recognize words (Hayati and Mohamedi, 2011; Gorjian, 2014) and reduce their anxiety levels (Winke et al., 2010; Gorjian, 2014). However, subtitles are also reported to improve some other areas of language learning, such as vocabulary acquisition (Taylor, 2005; Winke et al., 2010; Hayati and Mohamedi, 2011; Gorjian, 2014), oral production (Danan, 2004; Taylor, 2005; Gorjian, 2014), reading (Hayati and Mohamedi, 2011) or even the development of better learning strategies (Danan, 2004).

The issue is now when and how to use them in order that they are more helpful for the learner. Gorjian (2014), who studied the effect of subtitles on incidental vocabulary learning, came to the conclusion that reversed subtitling (audio in the L1 and subtitles in the L2) was the most effective way of learning L2 vocabulary, followed by standard subtitling (audio and subtitles in the L2). Winke et al. (2011) said to this respect that if a video was shown twice with and without subtitles, the order of viewing had an effect on the subsequent recognition of vocabulary –with subtitles being available on the first viewing as the most effective option. Regarding their use for listening comprehension purposes, many authors agreed that subtitles could make a video in the L2 accessible to students of all different levels as long as we knew which type was more beneficial for each level: namely L2 subtitles for intermediate students and L1 subtitles for beginners (Hayati and Mohamedi, 2011), as even if it seems that beginners will not benefit from the use of subtitles and even if it seems that L1 subtitles will distract learners from the processing of the L2 audio, the truth is that beginners have been reported to improve their processing skills with their use (Danan, 2004; Taylor, 2005).

Finally, we would like to mention one more beneficial use of subtitles for the improvement of the L2 that we have found particularly interesting. That is the proposal of learning via subtitling proposed by Sokoli (2006). In her study, participants were supposed to work with a tool for subtitling videos from their L2 into their L1, a task which ensured active viewing among learners and which combined the benefits of the outdated translation method, of the use of audiovisual material and of the fashionable use of ICTs in the classroom. Moreover, the process of subtitling involved a series of micro-activities considered beneficial for listening comprehension, such as taking notes or summarizing parts of entire monologues/interactions, prioritizing information in a way that meets the criteria of subtitling and integrating top-down with bottom-up processing. With all these interesting ingredients, it is obvious that we decided to pay some tribute to this study in our own innovation project.

3.3.3.1.2 Podcasts and blogs

The arrival of ICTs to our society has been translated into a great revolution in all aspects of our everyday lives, changing the way we conceive reality –i.e. the way we communicate or even the way we learn about the world. Given their relevance within our daily routines, it was just a matter of time that ICTs were introduced at schools as the ultimate resource for learning, as we have previously seen. However, the problem with ICTs is that, even if everyone is aware of their potential, not everyone knows how to naturally integrate them in the classroom (O'Bryan and Hegelheimer, 2007). For a long time, it has been believed that the mere introduction of ICTs in the classroom, in any form or for any purpose, was already beneficial –maybe because

its novelty effect was motivating for the student and, therefore, beneficial in the short-term. Nevertheless, ICTs should not be considered a mean in itself but a mean-to-an-end, a resource to be used for its potential pedagogical implications. We must here remember the statement of Warschauer and Meskill (2000) which we previously cited, in which the authors argue that even if ICTs are not the panacea for language teaching, when appropriately used they can help reshape the content and the processes of language education.

Given the need to carefully choose tools which not only match our context, but which can also be easily integrated in the classroom with the aim of developing students' oral skills, we here provide a thorough analysis of the potential of blogs and podcasts. These resources initially match O'Bryan and Hegelheimer's (2007) principles of usefulness and effectiveness of CALL technologies: they are technologies that young adults use nowadays, they have the potential to transform instruction and they allow the creation of innovative materials.

The word podcast comes from the words "iPod" –the Apple company media player– and "Broadcasting", and it consists on a digital recording of an audio –i.e. radio broadcast or similar program– which is usually published on the internet as an MP3 file and which listeners can download and play whenever they want (Kavaliauskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene, 2009; Constantine, 2007). If we think about the content of podcasts carefully, there is nothing new about it: it is just a mere audio recording, authentic or especially designed for EFL purposes. However, what is new about podcasting is the ease of publication, subscription and use across multiple environments (Rosell-Aguilar, 2007). That together with the fact that nowadays we have all access to broadband, personal computers and MP3 devices have turned podcasts into a very popular resource among young –and not so young– people (Lee, McLoughlin and Chan, 2008).

Podcasts seem to have adapted very well to the educational context. Jobbings (2005), for example, provided a very comprehensive analysis of how podcasts related to some learning objectives of the British curriculum, stating that through the design, recording and publication of podcasts students were finding things out, developing ideas and exchanging and sharing information. Rosell-Aguilar (2007), on the other hand, managed to link podcasting with several learning theories which supported their use, such as constructivism –with podcasts, knowledge is constructed through active exploration, observation, processing and interpretation–, informal and lifelong learning or even mobile learning –where learning happens in a non-fixed or predetermined location. Moreover, he also highlighted some of their advantages, namely the fact that they provided access to authentic materials, that they were portable, convenient and easy to use, that they were attractive for students and thus motivating, that obtaining/creating

them was free of charge or that they could give visibility to individuals and institutions. In the same line, Fox (2008) and Kavaliauskiene et al. (2009) also praised podcasts regarding the fact that they provide authentic language, that they foster intrinsic motivation, that they are easily accessible and that they may be used when and how the teacher/student wants –allowing students to work at their own pace whenever they want and allowing teachers to extend lessons beyond classroom time. Finally, O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2007) cited a study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2005) to state that the benefits of podcasts for education originated in their potential to arouse interest or curiosity in a new topic, to explain connections between new and previous material, to serve as "advance organizers" before presenting a new topic, to explain nuances and intricacies of a difficult concept or to bring in other people's viewpoints.

If podcasts were highly valued in the general education context, they have been even more praised in EFL contexts, where they are considered not only a source of input, but also a very interesting resource to promote students' output. Podcasts, in fact, are considered to fit the most relevant SLA theories according to Rosell-Aguilar (2007), since this tool may use authentic materials, they can be considered meaningful and engaging rather than repetitive and stressful and they can offer opportunities to hear modified comprehensible input among other things.

The use of podcasts as a product to be consumed by students dates back to the introduction of this resource in the educational field. In order to see a revision of some of these early uses of podcasts, it is very interesting to have a look at Lee et al.'s (2008) study, where they summarized some of them –i.e. podcast to supply students with their lectures, to provide them with supplementary activities or with orientation to upcoming class activities or to allow them to access the foreign culture and language of native speakers. This latter use has been the most popular one, with many authors researching how accessing podcasts can make students improve their listening skills or their language skills in general. Stanley (2006) and Rosell-Aguilar (2007), for instance, stated that listening to podcasts could be used to support language learning and they compared the two possible options available nowadays: 1) authentic podcasts, which can be listened to and worked with in the classroom and which can encourage learners to subscribe for further listening practice outside the school; and 2) podcasts specifically designed for EFL/ESL learners, which tend to be perfectly fitted for language learning purposes and which can consist on complete courses or on supporting materials. Fox (2008), on the other hand, tried to show how a talk radio podcast not directly addressed to EFL students could help learners improve their language skills, as it could be used as a classroom listening exercise prepared by the teacher, for dictation practice or to encourage students to listen to it for pleasure. Sze (2006) also discussed the possibility of using podcasts

to enhance students' listening skills, as they were especially interesting for extensive listening, for motivating student interest in listening to English and for giving learners exposure to native speakers (Rost, 1991 –cited in Sze, 2006). In the same line, Constantine (2007) supported the use of podcast for the development of students' listening skills based on their provision of authentic language in authentic contexts, on their relevance for the learner and on their transferability to students' everyday lives. Moreover, she argued that they could be effectively used in all different levels –i.e. beginners can benefit from global listening (getting used to the language and its patterns), intermediate learners can get in touch with authentic texts and advanced learners can exercise their listening skills and learn from these texts. Finally, Kavaliauskiene et al. (2009) carried out a study to examine the challenges of students when listening to authentic podcasts and their perceptions of improvement and they came to the conclusion that podcasts were highly valued by students when it came to improving their listening skills, even if some students were not that keen on only using this technology for such purposes.

Nevertheless, we should not forget that listening to existing podcasts is not the only possibility to introduce this resource in the EFL classroom: students can also design, produce and publish their own podcasts. Stanley (2006), who also mentioned the possible ways in which podcasts could be used as listening materials, stated that another potential use of this resource is allowing students to record their own, either using a free automatic podcast creation site or either recording an audio and uploading it later to a blog. According to the author, the main advantage of this use is that students are motivated to speak and produce oral materials, as they have a real audience –podcasts can be accessed by virtually anyone, so the potential audience goes beyond the classroom to the general public. In the same line, Sze (2006) proposed the creation of students' podcasts highlighting its numerous benefits, namely the motivation they fostered, the chance they gave students to practice and rehearse to achieve perfection, the collaboration networks they enhanced, the need to pay attention to accuracy that they triggered on students –as learners were aware of the permanent component of podcasts–, the possibilities they gave teachers to adapt to different levels of students or different class sizes, and the opportunity they gave shy students to participate. Rosell-Aguilar (2007) also contemplated this possible use of podcasts and made a list of the potential types which could be produced –i.e. news broadcasts, meetings and conference notes, or students' projects. A little bit more extensive is the list of Sze (2006), who argued that in order to teach speaking through podcasts, teachers could make students read things aloud, give their thoughts on an assigned topic, listen to their classmates' thoughts and respond, create an oral diary, carry out group presentations of a completed project, engage in debates, role plays or dramatic monologues, or tell stories and describe pictures/images. Finally, a specific example of how

students could produce a podcast for language learning purposes is the study of Lee et al. (2008), who tried to foster the creation of short radio-style shows through podcasting among undergraduate students. The study, carried out with a group of IT students, showed that, through podcasting, students could engage in collaborative and cooperative learning –as creating podcasts was supposed to trigger the division of labour and the engagement of students in a coordinated effort to complete a task– and in complex knowledge building and creation. Similar to this study is that of Rowan (2007), where even if he did not use podcasts for the delivery of radio shows, he also used this "radio" format to allow students to use the L2 in a natural and creative manner, to promote their oral skills –speaking, listening and pronunciation– , and to get students closer to new alternative and authentic listening sources, since students had to use podcasts as models for their own stories. Guzzo de Almeida (2008) also analysed the potential use of podcasts for the creation of radio programs, giving some examples that had already been carried out.

The other resource that we have selected for this innovative project given its suitability with the principles of usefulness and effectiveness, as we previously stated, is the blog. A blog –or weblog, as they were initially called– is an online journal with one or many contributors which can host not only text, but also hyperlinks –links to other websites– and other media (Duffy and Bruns, 2006). This "multimodality" characteristic is in fact one of its main elements attractiveness, as blogs cannot only include text as many may think –blogs can also include colours, images, audio and video files, or even hyperlinks (Godwin-Jones, 2006; Noytim, 2010; Amir, Ismail and Hussin, 2010).

Given their peculiarities, blogs have been considered quite valuable within the educational field, maybe even more than podcasts in the first place. For example, if we assumed that podcasts were easy to download or to create, blogs are even easier to design and manipulate thanks to the current providers in the market nowadays –providers offer a friendly-user template where bloggers only have to write or add media without getting into technicalities (Dieu, 2004; Pinkman, 2005; Duffy and Bruns, 2006; Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene, 2006; Kim, 2008). Blogs are also free, as in the case of podcasts, something which turns them into egalitarian learning and teaching tools (Dieu, 2004; Noytim, 2010) that can be used as long as students have access to a personal computer or any electronic device connected to the Internet. However, leaving aside these technical issues, blogs are also very valuable for their educational potential: they provide opportunities for real communication, extending the audience beyond the classroom and raising students' awareness of authorship and readership (Pinkman, 2005; Godwin-Jones, 2006; Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene, 2006; Kim, 2008; Noytim, 2010), they provide an exciting and motivating learning environment (Pinkman, 2005; Noytim,

2010), they promote critical, analytical, creative, intuitive and associational thinking (Duffy and Bruns, 2006; Kim, 2008; Noytim, 2010; Amir et al., 2011), they foster collaborative work and, thus, communicative and collaborative skills (Duffy and Bruns, 2006; Godwin-Jones, 2006; Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene, 2006; Kim, 2008; Amir et al., 2011), they can be combined with face-to-face teaching and foster learners' work outside the classroom –leading to learner independence and autonomous learning (Pinkman, 2005; Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene, 2006; Noytim, 2010; Amir et al., 2011), they can be used as a personal portfolio where students and teacher could track down work and improvements made (Dieu, 2004; Godwin-Jones, 2006; Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene, 2006), they enhance a more student-centred learning environment (Sun, 2009; Amir et al., 2011), and they match students current and future needs –as they may not only use blogs now for pleasure, but they may have to use them in their future works as well (Duffy and Bruns, 2006).

However, in order that blogs prove to be as beneficial as they seem, we have to make sure that we know which types of blogs can be used, which elements they should include in order to attain their goals and which uses they can be given in order to prove effective for education and, in our particular case, for language learning. Regarding the categorization of blogs, Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene (2006), and Noytim (2010) distinguished three types of blogs: the tutor blog, the learner blog and the class blog. The tutor blog is particularly useful for the teacher, as it can be the space where he/she keeps students updated with class activities and further resources. However, in our project we have decided to focus just on leaner and class blogs, as they give prominence to the students –blogs become thus a space where students can express their voice while they leave recordings of their language development.

Concerning the elements of a good blog, authors propose a great variety of requirements. Dieu (2004), for example, believes that in order that a blog fulfils its purposes, it must contain automatic date-stamping for each post, an archive of past post by date or theme, a tool for readers to leave their comments and a link area. Moreover, she argues that blogs work best if you use them as long-term assignments to improve students' overall fluency and competence, not as an isolated task. Kim (2008), on the other hand, reinforces the idea of leaving a space for comments and adds some other requirements, such as the need for instructors and students to post information from other websites and sources to ensure multimodality, the need for a RSS system and a visualization tool embedded in the blog to enhance information retrieval or the need for teachers to ensure that the blog can be accessed by a wider audience and that the blog allows students to express themselves freely.

Finally, we will revise some of the most successful uses and applications of blogs for language learning, something that is particularly interesting for our study. Traditionally, blogs have been seen as a tool with great potential for the development of students' reading and writing skills. Duffy and Bruns (2006), for instance, proposed that, from a pedagogical perspective, blogs could be used to post comments on literature readings, to encourage students' reflections, to create a student e-portfolio or as a collaborative space where students could review course-related materials. In all those cases, teachers and students could review classmates' works and provide feedback, something which was extremely beneficial for further learning. Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene's (2006) work showed that blogs could be used for learners to further improve their written productive skills, as being in front of a wider audience could make student reflect more on their performance when writing and be more open to corrective feedback as well. Amir et al. (2011), on the other hand, praised blogs for their potential as collaborative writing tools, as they made the task easier for participants –i.e. members could discuss the drafts better, improve them faster and participate more evenly. In their study, where 320 Language and Technology students participated, the analysis of learners' blogs made them conclude that they could improve their vocabulary and general knowledge, as well as their writing skills, when doing collaborative writing through this tool.

Nevertheless, as it was previously anticipated, blogs can host nowadays way more than just written content. Authors like Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene (2006) already envisioned the possibility of working oral skills via listening exercises embedded in teachers' blogs and most of the authors revised so far talked about the chances for exchange and communication that blog-related activities could trigger. However, it is not a matter of what a blog can provide students to engage in oral communication, but it is also a matter of what students can produce in terms or oral content for their blogs.

Several scholars have already researched the use of blogs as the host sites for student-made audios. In the case of Ducate and Lomicka (2009), blogs were used by twenty-two American students learning French and German to host five scripted oral tasks and three extemporaneous oral tasks. The aim of the study was to see if students could improve their pronunciation of the foreign language after being exposed to this method, something which could not be proved due a possible lack of time –the study was not carried out for enough time in order to see any outcomes. Nevertheless, their study showed that blogs provided a motivating and supporting environment for students to start improving. We could also analyse the study of Appel and Borges (2012), where an asynchronous online tuition project was established so that learners could develop their oral production and interaction online. The resource used was called Langblog and it used blogging technology as if it was a voice forum

for students to interact asynchronously. After analysing the use of the resource by a group of students, authors concluded that it was highly valued by course designers, teachers and students and that the pedagogical exploitation of the tool has even greater than it was expected at the beginning. Hsu, Wang and Comac (2008), on the other hand, used audioblogs to host students' oral assignments and they came to the conclusion that these type of blogs were extremely interesting because they not only facilitated interaction and motivated students to do a better job, but they also provided the teacher with an easy method to evaluate oral assignments and to provide individualized feedback. Sun (2009) also researched the introduction of blogs into L2 speaking courses and tried to see their effect on participants' learning processes and learning strategies and on participants' perceptions of their own learning. The results of this study showed that voice blogging was not only beneficial in the development of different learning strategies, but that it also made students improve according to their perceptions –i.e. students felt that they were producing authentic and purposeful language and, therefore, they were taking more risks. The authors of this paper also concluded that blogs constituted a dynamic forum which fostered extensive practice, learning motivation, and authorship among other things. Finally, going one step ahead, Hung (2011) proposed the introduction of videos in blogs –or what he called "vlogs"–, something which was highly valued by students, especially when they tried to improve their speaking skills. Among the many benefits of this innovative resource, the author cited the possibility they gave students to complete task at their own pace, to engage in self-evaluation or to engage in peer learning.

Given the optimistic results of the abovementioned studies where blogs were used to host audio files for the development of language learning and the ones previously discussed which highlighted the many benefits of podcasts as a replacement for traditional audio recordings, we decided to propose a project in which blogs and podcasts were involved.

We do not want to forget about the possible drawbacks and limitations of using these technologies. Hung (2011), for instance, found out that the use of blogs with audios was filled with challenges –namely technical difficulties, affective interferences (i.e. students who feel uncomfortable to present the materials they have produced to a large online audience) or time investment (since working on these projects involves a lot of time and effort on the part of the teacher and the students, something which can be a little bit discouraging). In the same line, Pinkman (2005) also discovered that since blogging relied on learner independence and on work beyond the classroom, most of the time students ended up dropping the activity, even when they seemed motivated with the task. Nevertheless, it is true that benefits of using these technologies outnumber their potential drawbacks, something which encourages us to go on despite such difficulties, even challenging them when necessary.

3.3.3.2 Application of videos and blogs & podcasts in our innovative project

The development of this dissertation was based on the design of two experimental teaching units that could collect all the innovation we wanted to introduce following an effective communicative approach that could eventually result in the improvement of the students' oral skills.

As we previously mentioned, teachers nowadays are constantly reminded of the importance of introducing a different approach to language teaching by education authorities. However, we have also discussed that teachers do not usually have the right tools to drive change, no matter if it involves modifying their roles and behaviours or if it involves embracing different learning approaches and introducing innovative materials. It becomes obvious then that education authorities should not expect change to happen until teachers are given the right tools to enforce such change.

Changing teachers' roles and behaviours is obviously something necessary and something that needs to be further addressed if we want change to happen –that is, in fact, what comprehensive innovation is about. Nevertheless, it is something that, as we argued before, is not going to be addressed in this study given its complex nature –i.e. changing teachers' roles involves a complex and long-lasting change which we do not intend to address in this dissertation. Moreover, this debate could derive into a debate of teacher training, something which goes beyond the focus of our study right now. We therefore propose using materials as one of the main driving forces for change in the language classroom, as their potential benefits can be easily controlled and easily shared across different classroom realities.

In our previous sections, we have already advanced that, most of the times, teachers are not only aware of the tools that could introduce change in the classroom, but that they also have access to them in most cases. Nevertheless, their knowledge tends to be not teaching specific –i.e. they know that ICTs are beneficial, but they have not been usually instructed on which ICTs can be used for educational purposes– and very theoretical –i.e. even if they know which specific tools they should use and why, they have not been usually taught how to design tasks with them. It is for that reason that, in the previous section, we provided a careful analysis of three specific tools (videos, blogs and podcasts) and several examples of use. Nevertheless, in this dissertation we want to go beyond a mere literature review by proposing our own examples of use, as it is only this way we can specifically address the limitations of the Spanish system and provide a tailor-made answer to them.

Before we start analysing these teaching units, we would like to point out several principles that were taken into account for the design of tasks –principles extracted from the chapter on how to select materials and design activities, which provide added value to our proposals. A principle which we considered crucial for an effective selection of materials and tasks is that of deriving content from learners' needs and interests[5] (Nunan, 1988), something which made us pay attention to the structure of tasks, the functions that were exercised with them, the situations they recreated, their genre, the processes and procedures they involved or the language skills practiced through them. Another issue we also took care of was that of difficulty, as we tried to provide students with tasks that matched their level –and in case they did not, with aid options that compensated this fact. In order to do so, we tried to control the degree of relevance of the task, the complexity of instructions and content, the amount of prior context provided, the amount/source of help available, the degree of grammatical accuracy and context appropriacy expected, or the amount of time available to carry out the task (Brindley, 1987 – cited in Nunan, 1989). Finally, following Hall (2011), we tried to make sure that all these tasks matched and fulfilled our method, as only this approach prevented us from losing focus from our real purpose.

3.3.3.2.1 Teaching Unit 1

Our first experimental unit revolves around the introduction of videos in the EFL classroom for the development of a wide range of tasks with multiple purposes. Firstly, we would like to carefully analyse the materials used, which not only match our purpose given their nature –we have already explained the many benefits of using the video format for the EFL classroom– but also because they went through a careful selection process.

In our first session, for example, we selected a series of clips from films and sitcoms –authentic materials inherently interesting for students– to design a "guess what happens next" exercise. In this case, we decided to show certain extracts and not the whole film/episode because this was the only way we had to provide some focus on the task (King, 2002) and to guarantee an adequate length of sequence for students to easily follow it (Burt, 1999). This being said, we must also point out that the main plot of these scenes could be easily followed without knowing the full context (Burt, 1999). Moreover, this selection was not at random: scenes selected showed controversial cross-cultural references that could encourage students to make use of their own schemata to solve the puzzle, making wrong assumptions given their lack of knowledge of the L2 culture. As a result, the selection of clips had the potential to not

[5] Students' needs and interests were derived from the analysis of limitations of the Spanish system and from a motivation test in which students validated Dörnyei's (1994a) list of motivation strategies.

only trigger an interesting communicative exchange, but also to make students learn a little bit more about the L2 culture. Nevertheless, it must be also taken into account that the selection of clips did not take into account language or content difficulty, so task difficulty had to be controlled through different sources –namely by the provision of subtitles in the L2, of prior context and of clear instructions and guided orientation on how to complete the task.

In the second session we worked with two clips from one particular film –Bend it like Beckham. The reason why we chose this film had not only to do with its potential attractiveness for students (Burt, 1999) –it is a film which combines football and teenagers with their typical problems–, but also given the many controversial topics for discussion that it presents –i.e. cultural shock. The two extracts selected, in fact, are great representatives of such topics, so they helped students reflect and discuss about them without actually needing to watch the whole film –independence of sequence. Once again, however, scenes were not selected according to content and language difficulty, making it necessary to provide students with other strategies to compensate –i.e. subtitles in the L2, a great amount of prior context and clear instructions on how to carry out the task.

Session three made use of three clips representing different genres: a short documentary, a sitcom and a film. These three clips, presented in its complete version in the case of the documentary and in short extracts in the case of the sitcom and the film –a matter of focus and length, as we have previously discussed– represented popular celebrations in English-speaking countries and the way people celebrate them. As a result, they could be used as an excuse to make students reflect on L2 speakers' traditions and as an opportunity to carry out a traditional listening comprehension exercise to check if students were able to understand specific information in authentic texts. In the case of the documentary, this video was selected due to its ability to effectively balance dialogues and visual support (King, 2002). For that reason, no subtitles in the L2 were provided, as the prior context provided and the activity itself were considered enough for students to carry out the task. Nevertheless, in the case of the sitcom and the film, selection of scenes was not done based on difficulty criteria –they were selected based on their relevance and on their independence of sequence–, so subtitles in the L2 were included to complement the activity and the prior context provided.

Finally, in sessions four and five a series of instructional videos were used in order to carry out a subtitle workshop in which students were supposed to learn how to translate and introduce subtitles in a video in the L2, an idea based on Sokoli's (2006) study which proved to be extremely innovative, motivating and attractive for students. In this case, it was the first time that we used instructional videos instead of authentic ones, which are supposed to be more

beneficial for language learning as we have previously seen (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982; Guariento and Morley, 2001; Hwang, 2005; Gilmore, 2007). However, their use in this context was totally justified in our opinion –given that students were asked for full comprehension, we needed videos to be easily understood and the fact that they had been previously evaluated for language, content and length made the task easier (Burt, 1999). Moreover, even if the material itself was not authentic, the task, on the contrary, was –something which ensured relevance and authenticity (Guariento and Morley, 2001). The difficulty of the task was also controlled by the step by step familiarization with the task and the software, as students were expected to be introduced to audiovisual translation little by little: first they would familiarize with the general principles of audiovisual translation and the subtitle software, getting to see specific examples, and then they would start experiencing it themselves, facing translation without software technicalities in the first place to later move on to a complete experimentation of what translating subtitles really involves. We assume that mastering audiovisual translation takes much more than two one-hour sessions, as not even students completing a BA in Translation get to master it unless they complete specific post graduate courses. Nevertheless, we understand that for students to get acquainted with this type of translation, two sessions are more than enough. Furthermore, the fact that these two sessions represent just a mere introduction to the topic encourages students to further explore on the topic, ultimately leading to autonomous learning.

Now that the selection of materials has been extensively justified, we would like to have a look at the tasks which were designed to effectively exploit the potential of such materials. These tasks, as we have previously anticipated, should not only match our method, but should also prove to match Spanish students' needs –which, as we identified before, have to do with their ability to communicate orally.

Regarding the development of students' listening comprehension skills, tasks within this first experimental unit are supposed to fulfil Rost's (2001) principles of effective listening comprehension teaching, which include containing a careful selection of input resources –we have already seen how we chose authentic, varied and challenging but accessible materials–, portraying a creative design of tasks that allows learners to activate their knowledge and monitor what they are doing –we will see how activities not only involved the traditional testing of text comprehension, but also reflection, problem-solving or conversion into a different format–, and integrating this skill with other language skills –i.e. students get to read and listen with subtitles and they are always encouraged to speak and write in order to complete the activity. It is also worth mentioning that all these tasks –except the subtitle workshop, which involved a more complex sequencing– followed Hedge's (2000) basic stages of an effective listening

comprehension task, namely a pre-listening stage to activate prior knowledge, a while-listening task to engage students with the video and assist comprehension, and a post-listening task to check and discuss responses and move towards a whole-class reflection. Moreover, all these tasks allow learners to exercise top-down and bottom-up processes, equipping them with suitable strategies to cope with tasks eventually more and more difficult. Finally, we should not forget about the many benefits of making tasks revolve around videos to improve learners' listening skills, as this tool has been proved to increase situational and interactional authenticity –making the task closer to students' everyday lives–, to provide the learner with verbal and non-verbal information –something which assists him/her processing and comprehending aural input–, or to intrinsically motive him/her in the completion of the task or in the further completion beyond the class –i.e. if we used only an extract of a film, students may feel motivated to watch the complete film at home.

Now, even if we could justify the value of these tasks for the teaching of listening comprehension just through their general characteristics, we would like to go a little bit beyond and analyse their potential task by task. If we have a look at the first session, for example, we may realise that all three tasks involve practicing listening comprehension. However, they do it in different ways. The first activity, for example, is a warm-up activity where students get to brainstorm key vocabulary, to discuss the topic of the aural texts they are going to listen to or even to predict content from the title of each extract, so they are promoting the development of their listening skills not only by engaging students in a communicative exchange with their classmates, but also through exercising listening strategies –mainly top-down strategies. The second activity, on the other hand, is the main one within this task and it involves understanding the gist of videos in order to be able to provide a suitable continuation once the teacher stops them. This is thus a very interesting activity for the development of listening comprehension skills, as it requires students to engage in different functions –i.e. main idea comprehension and identification– and different responses –i.e. extending and answering questions (Lund, 1990). Finally, the last activity –a debate after seeing the real end to videos– helps students improve by providing them with appropriate feedback and by allowing them to integrate listening skills with speaking skills– students get to check and discuss responses while engaging in a very enriching negotiation of meaning as they communicate with other NNSs.

In the second session, we also start with a warm-up activity in which students also exercise listening strategies: students who have not watched this film try to predict content from an image –the film cover– and, students who have, try to activate prior knowledge by being asked to remember the plot of the film. On top of this, students exchange their points of view, engaging in negotiation of meaning. The main activity within this task, however, is the one

where students are asked to watch the two clips from this film in order to answer several questions. These questions, however, are not content questions –we are not trying to test what students have understood–, but discussion questions. As a result, according to Lund's (1990) categories, students exercise the function of main idea comprehension and to respond by extending –i.e. after understanding the gist, students have to reflect and make certain assumptions in order to appropriately answer these opinion questions. Finally, the last activity, which is a debate again, allows students once more to check and discuss responses while engaging in negotiation of meaning.

Session three, which revolves around popular celebrations in English-speaking countries, also starts by allowing students to brainstorm key vocabulary and predicting content from titles, adding this time the access to informative texts of each of the holidays that are going to be presented –intensive activation of content schemata. The main activity, in this case, combines content and opinion questions on the videos, something which involves the function of detail comprehension and two different responses: writing down specific information about the text and answering questions (Lund, 1990). The last activity is once more a debate where students check and discuss responses while engaging in negotiation of meaning.

The last two sessions, devoted to the subtitle workshop, involve many different functions and responses according to Lund (1990). When the teacher explains the general principles of audiovisual translation and of the Subtitle Workshop software, students engage in full comprehension in order to later do something –i.e. follow instructions. However, when they are shown examples on how to translate subtitles, students are asked to engage in full comprehension to later model their own translations. Once students start translating their own subtitles, replication is needed to later converse and condense –as the content of what is being said has to be translated into the students' L1 and, at the same time, fit the time and space constraints of subtitles. Finally, when students check their responses they get to engage in negotiation of meaning while getting feedback. On top of all this, we must also point out that, as we previously mentioned, an ultimate goal of this task is to indirectly encourage students to keep on practising this newly acquired skill outside the classroom.

Regarding the development of oral production in this first experimental unit, it is interesting to highlight that activities fulfil several of Hedge's (2000) principles for the effective teaching of speaking, namely the provision of a range and variety of activities, of different groupings –so that students get to experiment monologues, dialogues or even whole-class discussions–, of a friendly atmosphere where students may not feel anxious to express themselves or of

opportunities to engage in negotiation of meaning, which may trigger the enriching corrective feedback we previously mentioned in chapter 2.3.

If we decide to go into further detail, we can also say that the task in session one provides students with the chance to express their opinions and points of views during the warm up and debate phases, motivating them to express themselves freely about relevant topics –free discussion. This task, moreover, makes students engage in two types of enriching activities for the development of the speaking skill: a gap activity –as students have to communicate among themselves to solve a problem (i.e. what is going to happen afterwards once the clip is stopped)–, and task repetition –as all videos have the same structure (and, therefore, students have to replicate the same type of exchanges) and as students are asked to recreate a suitable ending twice (one for their small group and one for the whole class).

As far as the second and the third sessions are concerned, students are also encouraged to complete a gap activity –i.e. guessing what the film was about just by having a look at the film case– and a free discussion activity during the warm up. Then, when students have to complete the opinion/content questions after watching the video, students have to discuss answers with their partners, something which allows them to engage in negotiation of meaning as well as peer and cooperative learning. Finally, the debate phase allows once more a free discussion, where students can not only communicate with peers to solve a problem, but also to freely express their opinions and points of view.

Finally, in sessions four and five, students' oral skills are mainly practised as a way to exchange opinions and build cooperative learning in pairs, small groups and, ultimately, the whole class. As a result, we can see how students engage in a gap activity when they have to analyse the characteristics of audiovisual translation in exemplifying videos or even when they have to evaluate a translation proposal once they have already translated their own subtitles. Students can also be considered to engage in task repetition every time they have to share their proposal first with their partners and then with the rest of their classmates.

Finally, we will try to analyse how the teaching of pronunciation is promoted in this unit, as even if it may seem that it is not directly addressed anywhere, the truth is that it is promoted in different ways. First of all, all the times that students are presented with videos with subtitles –and thus they are forced to read and listen at the same time–, students are incidentally encouraged to notice pronunciation patterns while making links between spelling and segmental and suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation (Kelly, 2000). This is particularly important in the audiovisual translation workshop, since students have to pay close attention to all oral features

in order to faithfully reproduce it in their translation –and that obviously includes intonation and stress & rhythm patterns, which, as we have seen, may interfere in meaning. Students are also recurrently involved in communication activities, where even if the main focus is on communication, they are also getting to practice everything that they have previously learnt regarding pronunciation (Seidlhofer, 2001). Finally, it is interesting to highlight that, with all these tasks, students get to access an extensive listening practice, getting acquainted with a wide variety of accents and a wide variety of intonation and stress & rhythm patterns.

3.3.3.2.2 Teaching Unit 2

Let us move now to the second experimental unit, which revolves around the use of blogs and podcasts in the EFL classroom for the recreation of an attractive project –a radio station. We will also start by analysing the materials used which, as we previously anticipated, are supposed to be successful not only given their nature, but also given their selection process and the use we gave to them.

Before we start analysing materials per se, it is worth mentioning that the type of software to be used for the development of such a project is also relevant. In this case, one of the most relevant criteria for the selection of software should be that of difficulty of use, as we do not want students to spend more time in trying to understand the software than in performing the task. For that reason, we must use free, user-friendly software which students can easily master without devoting too much time –in our case, we are inclined to go for Wordpress to host the blog and Archive.org[6] to host the podcasts, but there are many other options equally valid. Another suggestion is providing students with everything predisposed and pre-arranged in order to save time –i.e. blog and podcast accounts generated and the blog parameters already predefined so that students do not have to spend time making choices about the format and/or about complementary tools. Nevertheless, a live exemplification prior to the development of these sessions is also recommended.

Now that this issue is clear, we should analyse the characteristics and uses we have decided to give to these materials, as this is what could define their potential effectiveness. In this case, we have decided to use a class blog which fulfils the role of a simplified website because it can not only host students' radio programs, but because it can also allow to extend the radio station audience beyond the classroom (Pinkman, 2005; Godwin-Jones, 2006; Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene, 2006; Kim, 2008; Noytim, 2010), and to provide students with an exciting and motivating learning environment (Pinkman, 2005; Noytim, 2010).

[6] See https://es.wordpress.com/create/ and https://archive.org/index.php.

Moreover, the fact that blogs are permanent and easily accessible has the potential effect to turn them into some type of e-portfolio of students' work, which the actual students and/or the teacher can access in order to track progress (Dieu, 2004; Godwin-Jones, 2006; Kavaliuskiene, Anusiene and Mazeikiene, 2006). Podcasts, on the other hand, have a double role in this project: first they serve as a source of inspiration or even as a model for the later creation of students' radio programs, and then they serve as the tool which hosts students recordings, making their embedding in the class blog as well as their promotion –via RSS feeds or via their inclusion in podcast directories– easier. Regarding the selection of podcasts for the modelling of the task, it must be pointed out that podcasts chosen tried to portray a variety of genres and content from one task to the other –allowing thus to match all different students' needs and interests–, and that they were selected from sources which gave enough aid options for students to easily follow them –i.e. by providing students with a wide variety of examples to choose from, different speeds or even transcripts. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that podcasts were not always completely authentic for a matter of level suitability, as we considered that the main aim of these podcasts was to provide students with a clear example of what they should do. Full comprehension was required and if students found them too difficult to follow, there was a risk that they may not use them for their designed purpose. This, however, did not have an effect on the authenticity of the task, as we were recreating two authentic activities: accessing online podcasts and creating an online radio later on (Guariento and Morley, 2001).

Once that the relevance of materials used has been explicitly shown, it is now time to further analyse the relevance of tasks designed for the aforementioned purpose of our innovative project: the development of students' oral skills.

Regarding the development of listening comprehension skills, the warm-up activities in all four sessions –listening to podcasts of the same genre to familiarize with the format or even to later imitate the actual text– are considered quite beneficial to this effect, as they allow learners to exercise their bottom-up and especially top-down strategies –activation of format and content schemata. On top of that, students are always given assistance in the comprehension of texts –mainly slowed down alternatives and transcripts– and, since they are supposed to be working in small groups, they are provided with not only a stress-free environment, but also with the chance to complete the task at their own pace, repeating and replaying the audio as many times as they want. This together with the fact that students are always given a wide range of podcasts to listen to –so that they can always select the ones they find more interesting or even more appropriate to their level– and that they are indirectly encouraged to subscribe to these podcasts directories for further autonomous learning, make this warm-up activity perfectly suitable for the development of the aforementioned skill.

In sessions one and four, listening comprehension is further developed throughout the second activity within the task: since students are supposed to select one of the audio texts to later imitate it, a series of subsequent reproductions for even a fuller comprehension are necessary in order to model and duplicate (Lund, 1990).

Finally, listening comprehension skills are developed throughout the whole task in all four sessions as students are always encouraged to engage in negotiation of meaning. Students need to carry out all activities in English, and therefore they have to communicate and discuss with their peers in order to solve problems and come to agreements.

As far as the development of speaking skills is concerned, activities within these tasks are supposed to be beneficial for this purpose for a number of reasons. First of all, the recording of imitative and extemporaneous texts is always preceded by a "familiarization phase" in which learners are able to recognize the main characteristics of a given genre or register, an activity which is key in the development of students' productive skills (Hedge, 2000). Moreover, speaking is practised through a myriad of activities and formats (Hedge, 2000) –i.e. monologues vs. dialogues, accuracy-based vs. fluency-based activities, interactional vs. transactional exchanges or even free-discussion activities vs. role-plays. In sessions one and five, for instance, students are asked to record a news broadcast and a commercial by imitating some of the ones which they have previously listened to in the warm-up section. As a result, students engage in an accuracy-based scripted activity where they mainly get to practice monologues – even if the whole task is supposed to be surrounded by transactional conversations for organizational matters as in all the rest of the other sessions. In session two, on the other hand, the task involves recording a debate based on other debates previously accessed, which entails a fluency-based, free-discussion/role-play activity where interactional dialogues predominate. Finally, session three consists on the recording of short story, half scripted and half improvised, where students get to practise a semi-scripted fluency-based role-play in which dialogues also predominate.

Nevertheless, the fact that these tasks provide students with a wide variety of contexts and situations to practice their speaking skills is not their only key characteristic. On the contrary, we must also point out that these tasks are supposedly beneficial for the development of speaking skills given that students are always provided with a relaxed environment –i.e. students do not perform tasks in front of the whole class, so their anxiety levels are usually low– and with enough support to engage in the activity –i.e. prior information/content for the development of their discussions or the constant assistance of the teacher–, elements which are perfect

ingredients for a successful speaking task (Hedge, 2000). Feedback, another relevant issue regarding effective oral production, is not available in the traditional format: the teacher does not correct students while or right after their intervention. However, feedback possibilities are multiplied once the audio text is recorded and uploaded in the class blog, as they cannot only be accessed by the teacher or students, but they can actually be accessed by virtually everyone (Pinkman, 2005). This awareness of readership and authorship, on the other hand, has the potential to increase the attractiveness and relevance of the task and to make students improve even more, since they may feel more motivated to perform well. All these tasks also enforce Bygate's (2001, 2006) beneficial task repetition system, as they all have the same structure –and thus students get to practice the same type of activity over and over– and as students are forced to reproduce the oral text of the radio programme at least twice –once for the rehearsal and once for the actual recording. Finally, the fact that students' performance is taped allows them or even the teacher to monitor the development of their speaking skills throughout the treatment (Kelly, 2000).

We should not forget that, once again, students also get to incidentally practice their speaking skills as they carry out tasks, engaging in purposeful communication which inherently triggers negotiation of meaning and peer learning among other things.

Finally, regarding the development of pronunciation in this experimental unit, we would like to point out that tasks within it comply with several of Morley's (1991) principles for the effective teaching of pronunciation. Tasks, for example, encourage students to recognize their responsibility, self-monitor their performance and recognize accomplishments –i.e. in imitative recordings, if students want to sound like the original they must control certain pronunciation aspects in their own speech. Moreover, tasks focus on both areas of pronunciation –segmentals and suprasegmentals–, allowing students to obtain a comprehensive approach to this skill. Finally, tasks within this unit involve different types of practice. The first and fourth sessions, for example, involve what Morley (1991) described as imitative practice or what Seidlhofer (2001) called listen and repeat activities –that is, activities in which students have to imitate a speech previously delivered to them as accurately as possible. This type of activity is considered to be beneficial for the development of pronunciation skills since it involves listening carefully to the audio to notice pronunciation patterns and then trying to reproduce such patterns. Tasks in the first and fourth sessions, moreover, make students read and listen at the same time –as students get to listen to the podcast while reading the transcript–, something which was highly valued by Kelly (2000) given that it allows students to link pronunciation and spelling. On the other hand, tasks on sessions two and three involve rehearsed and extemporaneous practice (Morley, 1991), where even if the focus is on communicating, there is a chance for students to

practise what they have previously learnt (Kelly, 2000) and to engage in negotiation of meaning. Moreover, these activities are also preceded by a listening and reading practice, as students get to listen to podcasts while reading their transcripts, something which, as we mentioned before, fosters the connection between pronunciation and spelling (Kelly, 2000). Finally, tasks in all sessions are supposed to be taped and uploaded to the class blog, another strategy proposed by Kelly (2000) for the development of pronunciation skills given that it allows learners to monitor their development throughout the unit and given that it triggers feedback from multiple sources.

3.3.3.2.3 Degree to which activities match students' interests

Now that we have argued why these activities are suitable to match students' needs, as they allow students to communicate orally in the L2, we would also like to justify why, in our opinion, these activities match students' interests according to Dörnyei's (1994a) list of motivating strategies in the EFL classroom. This list, as we previously anticipated, was validated by students who later tested our proposal, as in a pre-study phase they had to complete a motivation questionnaire in which, among other things, they were asked to indicate their degree of interest in a series of those motivating strategies proposed by Dörnyei (1994a). Answers to this questionnaire indicated that the strategies we had selected from this list were considered important –and thus interesting– for students and that, for that reason, we could use them as a guide to evaluate the degree of interest of our tasks. We will now specify the eleven strategies that we selected and the scores obtained in the motivation pre-questionnaire:

1. Strategy #1 - Include a sociocultural component in the L2 syllabus (i.e. watching films or TV recordings, playing music in the L2, inviting interesting native speaking guests and so on).
2. Strategy #2 - Develop learners' cross-cultural awareness system, showing not only differences but similarities (making the L2 more familiar to students).
3. Strategy #3 - Promote student contact with L2 speakers (i.e. organizing meetings with L2 speakers, organising school trips, exchanges…).
4. Strategy #4 - Develop learners' instrumental motivation by making students aware of the importance of the L2 in the world and in their lives.
5. Strategy #5 - Make the syllabus of the course relevant by trying to meet with it student's needs.
6. Strategy #6 - Increase attractiveness of the course content by using authentic materials, unusual and exotic supplementary materials, recordings, visual aids and so on.

7. Strategy #7 - Arouse and sustain curiosity and attention by introducing unexpected, novel, unfamiliar events (i.e. changing people's seats, changing the order of events in the classroom).
8. Strategy #8 - Increase students' interest and involvement in the task by designing and selecting varied and challenging activities, adapting tasks to students' interests, including new elements every time, proposing game-like tasks, leaving activities open-ended, personalising tasks so that students engage in meaningful interactions and so on.
9. Strategy #9 - Match difficulty of tasks with students' abilities.
10. Strategy #10 - Increase student expectancy of task fulfilment by helping them on their performance (i.e. familiarising them with the task, guiding them about procedures and strategies involved and so on).
11. Strategy #11 - Facilitate student satisfaction by allowing students to create finished products that they can perform or display, letting them know their achievements and celebrating success.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #1	40	1,67	5	4,03	0,72
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #2	40	2	5	3,55	0,71
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #3	40	1,5	5	4,21	0,81
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #4	40	1,67	4,67	3,72	0,77
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #5	40	1,33	5	4,19	0,77
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #6	40	2,06	4,61	3,69	0,54
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #7	40	2	5	3,99	0,69
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #8	40	1,67	4,67	3,68	0,57
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #9	40	2	5	3,99	0,59
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #10	40	2,33	5	3,73	0,60
Results Motivation Pre-Quest Importance Strategy #11	40	1,5	5	3,42	0,77
N válido (por lista)	40				

Table 1. Average interest of students in Dörnyei's (1994a) motivation strategies

If we think about the first strategy here selected and its degree of fulfilment in our proposed teaching units, we realize that we may not have presented a wide variety of sociocultural components. However, we must consider that both our teaching units revolved around the use of films and TV/radio recordings, something which made sociocultural components key. Regarding the second strategy, we could state that activities in the first teaching unit had a strong cross-cultural component which is easy to see straight away –i.e. the first task revolves around confusing cross-cultural situations and it challenges the use of students' schemata, the second session leads to reflection on cultural issues and the third and fourth sessions introduce students to cultural contents. This may not be the case in the second teaching unit, although the fact that students were accessing cultural products of the L2 society could indirectly develop the aforementioned cross-cultural awareness. Strategy number three is, however, one of the few strategies that we did not tackle with our proposal –at least directly, as the blog in the second teaching unit could eventually lead to such contact (Pinkman, 2005). Nevertheless, it is something we would like to address in future proposals, as it was the strategy which was valued the highest. As far as strategy number four is concerned, we believe that our teaching units managed to "develop learners' instrumental motivation by making them aware of the importance of the L2 in their lives", as our emphasis on authentic tasks was justified for that reason –we wanted learners to fulfill tasks which could resemble situations they may have to face in the future. Strategy number five, on the other hand, could be considered to be fulfilled and already justified, as the activities proposed and their potential to improve students' oral skills were long exemplified above. The same goes with strategy number six –we have already specified how and why these teaching units revolve around authentic materials and other attractive resources. Regarding strategy number seven, we believe that in our teaching units novelty is introduced in different ways: through the integration of authentic materials and ICTs in the classroom, through the introduction of a new method where everything is about communication, or even through the proposal of different classroom dynamics (i.e. different groupings or different classroom distribution for example). On the other hand, we also believe that our teaching units fulfil strategy number eight, since we have designed and selected varied and challenging tasks that match students' needs and which are meaningful because they prepare students for everyday life situations. As for strategy number nine, we have already shown how, in both teaching units, we tried to control task difficulty in different ways: through a careful selection of materials or through the provision of aid options and accessible tasks. This leads to the subsequent fulfilment of strategy number ten, as the constant assistance and guidance that students receive in the fulfilment of tasks allows them to increase their expectancy to successfully complete the task. Finally, strategy eleven was especially accomplished in the second teaching unit, as students are supposed to create a complete product that is universally accessible. Nevertheless, tasks within the first teaching unit could also be considered finished products,

especially the one that entails subtitling –i.e. students get to see how the final product looks and they can easily display it and share it for the celebration of their success.

We should not forget that in our motivation questionnaire we also included an item which directly measured whether students found the topics which were going to be addressed in our teaching units interesting –i.e. worries and concerns of people our age, lifestyles in other countries, current news, special days & holidays, TV, cinema & literature and our training/education. Results on this specific item (3.65/5) showed that students agreed in general that these topics were of their interest.

3.3.4 Example of implementation

The main aim of our innovation project, as we have previously anticipated, is to provide teachers and institutions with the right tools to effectively integrate ICTs and authentic materials in the EFL classroom for the improvement of students' oral skills. With that idea in mind, we carefully designed a series of tasks and activities in which not only these resources are used, but which also proved to fulfil the requirements for an effective improvement of oral skills. Nevertheless, we believed that this proposal would not be complete until we tested its potential –even if this was not the main aim of the project. For that reason, we decided to carry out a pilot study in the form of a quasi-experiment in which, even if generalizations could not be made –given the amount of participants and the duration of the study–, we could at least test the potential of such tasks and activities.

This pilot study, moreover, could serve as an example of implementation which could guide teachers and institutions to subsequently implement it in their own schools and which could also help them further research into the efficiency of this proposal.

3.3.4.1 Context

This example of implementation was carried out in two secondary schools located in two neighbouring towns in the North of Madrid – NT1 and NT2. In order that we can better understand the effect of implementation of our innovation project in these two institutions, we are now going to thoroughly describe them and their immediate context, as only getting to know these things can we discern their possible interferences on the project itself.

NT1, located roughly 13 km North of Madrid, counts on 113,055 inhabitants today and it is one the biggest suburban areas of the North of the region together with NT2. It includes a

modest central urban area, several recently built districts, several residential areas, an emerging financial district and an average industrial area. NT2, larger in extension but smaller regarding its population –84,944 inhabitants– shares many similarities with NT1, mainly due to the fact that it is separated from the latest just by a main avenue. These two cities are in fact totally connected to one another, even sharing certain city services –i.e. the hospital or the official school of languages. This town also counts on a humble central urban zone, several recently built districts, several residential areas beyond the city core, and an ever growing financial and industrial district. Due to their characteristics, they cannot be considered commuter towns anymore, since many people work and live in them. However, it is true that they are still quite connected to the capital and that many people keep coming to these towns in search of affordable housing –some people do in fact commute to Madrid on a daily basis.

School number 1, where we tested the first teaching unit regarding the implementation of videos in the EFL classroom, was located in NT2 downtown, very close to the avenue that separates this town from NT1. The fact that this school is public and that it is located in the core of both cities, where those on the lowest incomes live, makes middle-class and working-class families their main target, with an ever-growing immigrant rate among students.

The school is a medium-sized institution which only offers formal education during the morning shift –in the evening shift it is used as the city's official school of languages. During this morning shift, the school offers all levels of mandatory secondary education (ESO) with an average of three groups per level –one of which belongs to the French bilingual section, which was implemented in the school in the 2010/2011 academic year. The school also offers reinforcement groups for students who seem to have trouble keeping up with the level, namely PMAR and *Diversificación* groups.

Students who have successfully passed their mandatory secondary studies can also access *Bachillerato* and *Formación Profesional* studies in this institution. *Bachillerato* studies, which currently give students access to university or higher vocational training studies, have two different specializations in this school: Arts & Social Sciences and Science & Technology. Regarding *Formación Profesional* studies –similar to vocational training studies–, which are divided into lower –*Grado Medio*– and higher –*Grado Superior*– levels, students at this institution can choose between five different options: *Grado Medio en Cuidados Auxiliares de Enfermería* –studies on nursing assistance–, *Grado Medio en Farmacia y Parafarmacia* –studies on pharmacy–, *Grado Superior en Higiene Bucodental* –studies on dentistry–, *Grado Superior en Anatomía Patológica y Citología* –studies on anatomical pathology and cytology–

and *Grado Superior en Laboratorio de Análisis y Control de Calidad* –studies on analysis lab and quality controls.

The school is managed by a Principal, a Head of Studies and four Head of Studies' assistants. It has been one of the most popular secondary education schools in town since it opened and, even if it could not be considered the most up-to-date school in the area, it is well known for its good relationship with the educational community surrounding it –which makes it an attractive choice for parents living in the area. Moreover, the fact that the school established a French bilingual section made it even more attractive, not only for its innovative offer, but also given the fact that it led to multiplying the school international projects –i.e. Comenius, Erasmus +, or eTwining projects.

School number 2, where we tested our second teaching unit regarding the use of blogs and podcasts, was once situated "outside" the city. However, in the last twenty years new neighbourhoods have been built on the area connecting the school to the city centre –now the school is easily accessible on foot from any area in town. This school is nowadays surrounded by new expensive neighbourhoods and it is also very close to a luxurious residential area. Nevertheless, this does not change the fact that most of its students still come from schools in the oldest districts of the city, so we could say that the main targets of the school are middle-class/working-class families. It is also important to note down that immigration in the area has highly increased in the past decades, so the rate of immigrants at school keeps growing every year.

This institution opened in 1974 and it was the first public secondary school in the city, so we could say it has been a well-known school for over 40 years. Nowadays, it is still one of the most populated schools in town, as it has one of the largest offers in the area. First of all, it offers all levels of mandatory secondary education (ESO) with an average of five groups per level. On top of that, for the last nine years one of these groups belongs to the bilingual German section. Students attending regular lessons in Spanish who have problems to achieve the level may get access to reinforcement groups such as the ones they also offered in School 1.

Students who want to move forward towards higher education may access *Bachillerato* in all its three different varieties: morning shift, evening shift and distance. The most common one, the morning shift, counts on five groups as well. These groups cover all specializations, including Fine Arts. In that respect, it stands as one of the few institutions in the Region of Madrid offering this specialization. In addition to all this, the school also offers *Formación Profesional*, with students getting to choose among the following higher vocational training

studies: *Grado Superior en Educación infantil* –studies on pre-school education–, *Grado Superior en Animación Sociocultural*– studies on sociocultural entertainment– and *Grado Superior en Integración Social* –studies on social integration.

Organization of such a large institution is quite complicated, so the school counts on a quite extended management team: a Principal and four Heads of Studies. The school is still nowadays one of the most popular schools in town, even if, as in the case of School 1, is not maybe one of the most up-to-dated schools in the area –both schools, for example, do not have a very powerful integration of ICTs. Nevertheless, and again like in School 1, its good relationships with the surrounding educational community and its projects –especially the German bilingual section– make it an eligible option for parents in town.

If we compare both schools, we may realize that they both present very similar characteristics: they are cohesive institutions, in modest quiet areas, where even if there is a concern for the development of foreign languages, innovation seems to be concentrated on their CLIL programs –no other innovation programs were observed concerning EFL. These schools, moreover, seem to be average regarding its technological implementation –they both have several computer labs, internet connection and some other IT resources (such as several digital boards as well as computers and overhead projectors in most classrooms), but they do not comply with the "one student, one computer" moto of some other institutions. These characteristics, however, were the characteristics we were looking for, as they represent the average public secondary school in Spain –and if we proved that this innovative proposal could work in these schools, it could mean that it could potentially work in any average public secondary school in Spain.

The area of implementation of our innovative proposal was in both cases an EFL classroom. In this case we decided to work with groups attending the subject *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* –English extension–, an optional subject in *Bachillerato* which has been offered in schools in the Region of Madrid for the past seven years in response to an increasing need for the use of foreign languages. This course is conceived as a complement to the compulsory subject of English in *Bachillerato* and focuses on the communicative aspect of language, most specifically on the development of students' oral skills –because, as we have previously said, oral skills are usually forgotten in the regular EFL classroom. As a result, the course is structured basically through four main domains: listening comprehension, speaking, language use and socio-cultural aspects and intercultural awareness. The first two domains could be considered the core of the course, with students being expected to progressively understand the main ideas, details, opinions and attitudes of a wide range of texts delivered on

an average speed in a wide range of accents, registers and styles and to progressively achieve a great level on fluency, spontaneity and accuracy that can enable them to communicate in all kind of different situations.

The reasons why we chose to test our innovative proposal with groups attending this subject were varied. On the one hand, we believed that the fact that students were taking an optional course would make it easier to get access to them, as they would not be constrained by time or external examination pressures. On the other hand, students enrolled in this subject would be students taking their *Bachillerato* studies, a moment in which it is quite easy to predict their level, given that there is a lot of literature on the level that students acquire after secondary school (see for example Alastuey and Agulló, [2012]). Finally, the fact that this subject was supposed to be a space to specifically improve students' oral skills made it a very interesting place to carry out our research: firstly, because we could have a closer look at the real implementation of this course and secondly because our innovative proposal, if successful, could find a suitable place in this course –even if with this we do not imply that our proposal could be also easily implemented in regular EFL courses in *Bachillerato*.

Regarding the agents concerned, since this study remained at the classroom level it only involved the students of the course and their teachers, although the latter in a more secondary position, as they were only invited to participate as mere observers and to complete certain questions about students. Students of these two groups were thus the most relevant participants of this study, with them being given a questionnaire and a test before and after the treatment and with them being subject to the treatment provided by the researcher.

The group of students at School 1 was a quite large group of 26 learners –although in our study, for organizational and participation reasons, we only analysed the results of 18 students. Given the optional nature of the subject of *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera*, students came from different groups and different *Bachillerato* specializations, although in this case the great majority was taking the Arts and Social Sciences specialization. They were mostly Spanish and, as we anticipated, they mostly came from middle-class families.

Scores Pre-Test (Listening & Speaking)[a]

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Results Listening Pre-Test	18	2,4	6,8	4,67	1,26
Results Speaking Pre-Test	18	2,38	7,13	4,20	1,56
Valid N	18				

a. Name of the school = School 1

Table 2. Scores in the Pre-Test (Listening and Speaking) of School 1

Questionnaire background information about students[a]

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Mark in *Ampliacion de Lengua* Extranjera	18	5	9	7,67	1,33
Mark in English	18	2	9	4,89	2,27
Global mark of the course	18	4,11	9	6,62	1,55
Years studying English	16	5	13	10,13	2,80
Socio-ecomomic level	16	4	9	6,19	1,56
Immigration (parents included)	16	1	2	1,94	,25
Self-assessment of their level of English	16	1	4	2,50	,97
Interest in English	16	2	5	3,44	1,21
Perspectives to use English in the future	16	2	5	4,06	,99
Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	16	1	5	2,87	1,15
Use of ICTs to learn English	16	1	5	3,00	1,21
Knowledge of other foreign languages	16	1	5	3,00	1,32
Participation level	18	3	5	3,44	,71
Attention degree in the classroom	18	3	5	4,11	,58
Motivation level according to the teacher	18	4	5	4,39	,50
Degree of effort in the classroom	18	3	5	3,94	,42
General performance in the APLE	18	3	5	3,72	,58
Valid N	16				

a. Name of the school = School 1

Table 3. Background questionnaire of students in School 1

Regarding their language level, students proved to be average EFL learners who, although they were getting good grades in this optional subject (an average grade of 7.67/10), they were not that successful in their regular EFL lessons –where they got an average grade of 4.89/10–, even if they had studied the language for an average of 10.13 years. This was supported by the fact that in the initial listening and speaking pre-test, based on B1 examinations of the CEFR, students got an average mark of 4.67/10 and 4.2/10 respectively. This, however, collapsed with the fact that they were not bad students in general, as their average grade of that academic year was around 6.62/10. When students were asked, they self-assessed their EFL level as intermediate and they mostly agreed that they were interested in learning English and that they would need the language in the future. On top of that, they stated that, to a certain degree (2.87/5) they had access to practising the language outside the classroom, that they used ICTs to improve their level (3/5), and that they knew some other foreign languages (3/5). When the teacher of the course was asked, the group scored quite high regarding their participation level, attention degree, motivation, effort and performance.

On the other hand, the group at School 2 counted on 23 students –although only 19 of them participated in this study. These students came mostly from the German section, as for them taking this subject was the only way to remain in contact with the English language –they were taking German as their first foreign language. Students in this group were mostly Spanish as well and they also came from middle-class families in general. Concerning their EFL skills, these students seemed to have a higher level in general, something that could not be easily compared having a look at their grades –as most of these students only took *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* and not English as a Foreign Language and there could be no comparison between both subjects. Nevertheless, if we have a look at the scores they got in the pre-test –which, as we previously explained, corresponded to a B1 level of the CEFR–, we can see that they had obtained better results than students at School 1 –7.03/10 in the listening test and 7.31/10 in the speaking test. Students at this school also stated that they had studied the language for a little bit longer –11.5 years on average– and that they were very interested in learning the language (4.61/5), as they considered that they were very likely to need it in the future (4.78/5). When asked about how often they used the language outside the classroom, students in general agreed that they had chances to do it (3.88/5) and they also said that they were mostly used to accessing ICTs to remain in touch with the language (4/5). It was also very helpful the fact that most of them spoke at least one more foreign language (4.06/5), which, in most cases, was German. The teacher of the course was also asked about the students' participation level, attention degree, motivation, effort and performance and in all cases, students scored pretty high –even higher than in School 1. We could therefore say that these students, in general, were better regarding their performance and their prior motivation levels. Nevertheless, since students in both cases came from similar contexts and they were all going to be presented with the same kind of treatment, we decided to work with them as one big group, considering that when random sampling is enforced, there are always going to be differences among participants.

Scores Pre-Test (Listening & Speaking)[a]

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Results Listening Pre-Test	19	2,4	10	7,03	2,13
Results Speaking Pre-Test	19	5,13	8,88	7,30	1,06
Valid N	19				

a. Name of the school = School 2

Table 4. Scores in the Pre-Test (Listening and Speaking) of School 2

Questionnaire background information about students[a]

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Mark in *Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera*	19	5	9	7,37	1,12
Mark in English	8	5	9	6,88*	1,46
Global mark of the course	19	5,56	9,5	7,53	0,97
Years studying English	18	10	15	11,5	1,38
Socio-ecomomic level	18	3	10	6,89	2,19
Immigration (parents included)	18	1	2	1,67	0,48
Self-assessment of their level of English	18	3	5	3,61	0,70
Interest in English	18	4	5	4,61	0,50
Perspectives to use English in the future	18	4	5	4,78	0,43
Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	17	3	5	3,88	0,93
Use of ICTs to learn English	17	1	5	4	1,06
Knowledge of other foreign languages	18	3	5	4,06	0,94
Participation level	19	1	5	3,47	1,26
Attention degree in the classroom	19	2	5	4,16	0,83
Motivation level according to the teacher	19	2	5	4,42	0,84
Degree of effort in the classroom	19	2	5	4,05	0,91
General performance in the APLE	19	2	5	3,95	0,78
N valid	6				

a. Name of the school = School 2

Table 5. Background questionnaire of students in School 2

3.3.4.2 Procedure

3.3.4.2.1 Description of the study

As we previously mentioned, the aim of this pilot study was to prove whether the innovative teaching units proposed in this dissertation had the potential to improve EFL students' oral skills. For that reason, this pilot study tried to prove the following hypotheses:

H1 – If we foster a more real and exhaustive use of the foreign language among our students, they will achieve better results regarding their oral skills.

H2 – If we use ICTs and authentic materials, students will make improvements in their oral skills and will be more motivated in the learning process.

Once the aim of the pilot study was clear and once the sample was selected, we tried to make sure that we complied with research ethics principles. In order to do so, we collected

authorisations from the schools and the students involved and obtained the approval of the University's Ethics Committee.

Afterwards, participants of the study were presented with a three-phase pilot study in which they were firstly asked to complete a pre-test to see their initial level regarding their oral skills –listening, speaking and pronunciation– as well as a pre-motivation questionnaire to know more about their interests when it came to learning English and to know more about what they were actually accomplishing in their *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* course. The second phase consisted on the implementation of the treatment, which entailed Teaching Unit 1 in School 1 and Teaching Unit 2 in School 2. Finally, the third phase involved participants completing a post test to see their level after the treatment in the same areas, a post-motivation questionnaire to analyse what had been accomplished in this respect during the treatment and a background information questionnaire in which participants had to answer personal questions which we considered relevant to describe the sample and to potentially interpret the data. In this third phase, moreover, teachers of both groups were also asked to complete a report on each student in which issues such as their participation level, attention degree, motivation, effort and performance were assessed.

3.3.4.2.2 Description of research instruments

As we could see in the previous section, in this pilot study we made use of three different research instruments: a pre/post-test to assess students' EFL oral skills before and after the treatment, a pre/post-motivation questionnaire to assess students interests and the degree to which these interests were accomplished in their classes and in the treatment, and two background information reports –one completed by students and another one completed by their teachers– in order to know more about the sample. These instruments were sometimes designed from scratch –as in the case of the motivation questionnaires and the background information reports– and sometimes selected from reliable sources –such as in the case of the pre/post-test, which were inspired in the work of Dörnyei (1994a). Nevertheless, in both cases the selection and design processes were carefully performed in order that these instruments served to their aforementioned purposes.

Let us begin analysing the process of selecting reliable instruments for the pre/post-test. In this case, we used three different tests to measure students' level before and after the treatment –one to measure their listening skills, another to measure their speaking skills and another one to measure their pronunciation skills.

In the case of instruments to measure students' listening and speaking skills, we decided to make use of official B1 examinations –that is, listening and speaking tests of the Cambridge PET B1 exams. Anyone could wonder why we use this exam as a test to measure improvement when it does not comply with the principles that guided the design of this innovative proposal –i.e. a method inspired in the CLT and task-based approach or the use of ICTs and authentic materials. However, we must say that even if it does not, the truth is that this is one of the most recognized EFL examinations and, thus, this is an exam that many students may have to go through in order to prove their level of English –so we believed that any proposal attempting to improve students' EFL level should reflect its effects on this test, at least in any way. On top of that, the fact that this is a well-known and recognized examination gave reliability and validity to this test. We were confident that this test appropriately measured these skills and always according to a B1 level (all exams had been tested enough to portray a similar level of difficulty). Finally, these tests and their assessment criteria were easily accessible, something which made it possible to extract several exams and their key/assessment criteria for our use in this pilot study.

Another question which may arise is why we chose the PET examination over all the other Cambridge examinations. As we previously saw in Alastuey and Agulló (2012), students who finish their *Bachillerato* studies are nowadays expected to achieve a B1 level of the CEFR, level which is supposed to portray this examination in particular. Nevertheless, we wanted to make sure that this exam was suitable for the level of our participants and therefore, before using it with our participants, it was previously tested by a different group of students from School 1. This initial testing showed that students attending a similar subject in the same academic year obtained an average score of 5.65/10 in a PET listening test and an average score of 5.45/10 in a PET speaking test, something which allowed us to conclude that the PET test was a suitable option for our participants –who were a very similar sample to the one used for this initial testing and who found the exam neither too easy nor too difficult.

In our study, we thus used two PET listening and speaking tests: one listening and speaking test for the pre-test and another listening and speaking test for the post-test. Listening tests were taken from the official Cambridge examinations website, more specifically from the *PET Handbook for teachers* (2012), a book which is targeted at teachers preparing learners for the exam and which can be downloaded as a PDF, and from the test samples available on the web. Considering that both tests represented the same level and the same exam, they both had a similar structure: an exercise with seven short recordings and seven related questions in which students had to choose a suitable image to answer such questions, a longer monologue or interview in which students had to answer several multiple choice questions, a long

monologue where students were asked to fill in the gaps and a long informal dialogue with a true/false exercise. Students could listen to the recoding twice and they were asked to complete these exercises within the duration of the recording, which included some minutes extra to check answers. Speaking tests were also extracted from the official Cambridge examinations website and they also came from the *PET Handbook for teachers* (2012) and from the test samples displayed on the website. The test involved students carrying it out in groups of two or three and, once more, it had in both cases the same structure: a general conversation led by the examiner in which participants were asked about personal details and other personal issues –i.e. likes and dislikes, daily routines and so on–, a simulated situation where students had to interact with each other to solve a problem , a monologue where each student had to individually describe a photograph on a given topic and finally a general conversation among participants and the examiner where the previously introduced topic was further discussed. Students were expected to speak for at least two to three minutes on each part and they could always rely on the assistance of visual images or their partner –although they could never ask for assistance to the examiner.

These tests were always corrected following the Cambridge examinations criteria, which we could find in the aforementioned *PET Handbook for teachers* (2012) and in the *PET Examination Report* (2005). According to these official documents, scores of the exam are usually expressed on a 0 to 100 scale and correspond to the aggregate of scores of each of the tests which compose it: reading and writing, listening and speaking. On the other hand, the minimum successful performance which a candidate typically requires in order to achieve a "Pass" grade corresponds to about 70% of the total marks. This, however, collides with our scoring system in Spain, which ranges from 0 to 10 and which establishes the middle (5) as the divisor line between failing and passing. For that reason, and with the idea of making comparisons with students' grades at school in mind, we decided to follow our Spanish scoring system when expressing participants' performance.

Regarding the assessment of the listening tests, we relied on the key of answers available at the end of the two sample tests selected for this study. Each right answer was awarded with one point over twenty-five –the total number of items on this test– and the final score was finally provided in a 0 to 10 scale. Test scores were revised twice to avoid possible assessment errors.

The assessment of speaking tests, on the other hand, was not as straight forward as the assessment of listening tests. This was obviously due to the fact that the speaking tasks on this test were not subject to objective assessment –there was not a list of correct answers to check. Nevertheless, we once more followed the Cambridge examinations assessment criteria, which

categorized students' performance in four areas –grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation and interactive communication¬– based on a chart of descriptors for each score. Participants thus were assessed on their individual performance –and not in comparison to their partner(s)– and they were awarded a global mark on each area for the whole test –and not for every single task they had to carry out. Final scores, which represented the mean mark of the four analysed areas together, ranged from 0 to 5 and they were later adapted to a 0 to 10 scale for interpretative issues. Scores were awarded following these criteria:

B1	Grammar and Vocabulary	Discourse Management	Pronunciation	Interactive Communication
5	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms, and attempts some complex grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary to give and exchange views on familiar topics.	Produces extended stretches of language despite some hesitation. Contributions are relevant despite some repetition. Uses a range of cohesive devices.	Is intelligible. Intonation is generally appropriate. Sentence and word stress is generally accurately placed. Individual sounds are generally articulated clearly.	Initiates and responds appropriately. Maintains and develops the interaction and negotiates towards an outcome with very little support.
4	*Performance shares features of Bands 3 and 5.*			
3	Shows a good degree of control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a range of appropriate vocabulary when talking about familiar topics.	Produces responses which are extended beyond short phrases, despite hesitation. Contributions are mostly relevant, but there may be some repetition. Uses basic cohesive devices.	Is mostly intelligible, and has some control of phonological features at both utterance and word levels.	Initiates and responds appropriately. Keeps the interaction going with very little prompting and support.
2	*Performance shares features of Bands 1 and 3.*			
1	Shows sufficient control of simple grammatical forms. Uses a limited range of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics.	Produces responses which are characterised by short phrases and frequent hesitation. Repeats information or digresses from the topic.	Is mostly intelligible, despite limited control of phonological features.	Maintains simple exchanges, despite some difficulty. Requires prompting and support.
0	*Performance below Band 1.*			

Figure 6. Assessment criteria on the Speaking PET test (Extracted from PET Handbook for teachers [2012])

In order to ensure objectivity in the results, participants' test went through a double correction process in which the researcher and three professional EFL teachers were involved. As a result, for each test we initially had two different scores: one provided by the researcher and another one provided by one of the participant EFL teachers. Scores were then compared and, as long as there was not a big difference between them –no more than one point of difference–, the mean of these two scores was then considered the final grade. In cases where the difference was of more than one point, the researcher and the given teacher were asked to come to an agreement on which score the student should be awarded, stating their opinions on the student performance and their interpretations on the chart's descriptors. When no agreement came from this discussion, such test had to undergo a third correction in order that the final score was the average of not two but three different assessments. Nevertheless, it

must be pointed out that all tests were recorded for further analysis and that raters could always go back to them in case they needed it.

We now move to the instrument used to assess students' pronunciation skills, which, in this case, was not entirely extracted from a pre-existent assessment instrument. Since we did not want students to carry out an additional test and given that the speaking test had been previously recorded –and that it involved some kind of natural conversation where, even if not all pronunciation problematic areas were addressed, students had many chances to test their pronunciation hypothesis in a communicative context–, the material used for its subsequent pronunciation assessment was the aforementioned speaking test recording. In order to provide students with a global average performance grade in this area, raters of this test had to award students with a global score on each of the following categories: segmentals, intonation and stress & rhythm. The reason why we chose these three categories for the assessment of pronunciation was not only due to the fact that they had been previously used in other similar tests (see pronunciation assessment chart in Volle [2005]). It could also be explained given the fact that these categories, as we saw on the section about how to teach pronunciation, are the main components of this language skill. Scores, as in Volle's (2005) proposal, were assessed on a 1 to 5 scale –and then adapted to a 0 to 10 scale– which, contrary to that of Volle, used the concept of intelligibility to describe the different levels of students. We here provide an example of how our assessment chart looked like, including the descriptors for each score:

	1	2	3	4	5
Segmentals (Phonemes/sounds)					
Intonation					
Stress and Rhythm					

DESCRIPTORS FOR SCORES

1 = We have to make a big effort to understand; often incomprehensible.
2 = We have to make efforts to understand; minimally comprehensive.
3 = Pronounced foreign accent requiring extra-sympathetic listening; comprehensible.
4 = We don't have to make big efforts to understand; mispronunciation but still clear.
5 = We don't have to make any efforts to understand; there is no/very little mispronunciation and it is 100-90% comprehensible.

Figure 7. Assessment chart for pronunciation test.

The assessment of pronunciation following this chart was carried out by a group of 27 native speakers who had no experience in rating pronunciation and who were neither experts on the field of pronunciation. The only key characteristic they shared was the fact that they were all learning Spanish –and they could therefore be more or less open to understanding participants' pronunciation difficulties. Nevertheless, raters were not asked to assess participants' performance with no prior assistance, but they were all trained to make informed decisions in their assessments. This training involved a one two-hour session where raters where briefly introduced to the area of pronunciation, its key components and the concept of intelligibility, and where they were also given an informative summary that they could use for further assistance during the rating process. Once more, each test was corrected twice by two different raters to ensure objectivity and the final grade represented the mean score of this two as long as there was not a difference of more than one point between them. If the difference between scores was superior to one point, then both raters had to come to an agreement on the final score and, in case this was not possible, a third correction was enforced –and thus the final grade was the average of these three ratings.

Now that we have thoroughly justified why we chose the tests we used to see if there was an improvement in participants' oral skills, we would like to explain how we designed our pre and post motivation questionnaires so that they gave us relevant information on how our proposal could potentially motivate students in their learning process, something which could eventually lead to further language development as we saw in section 1.2.3. In this case, as we mentioned before, we decided to design our own tailor-made questionnaire rather than using a pre-existent one, since we believed that the ones which had been already used did not match our context –and, therefore, they could not provide us with the information we were looking for. This, however, made our task even more difficult, as we had the responsibility to construct a questionnaire which was able to obtain reliable and valid data, something which entailed a rigorous process.

In order that our questionnaire complied with the criteria here specified, we decided to follow Dörnyei and Csizér's (2012) requirements on how to design and analyse surveys in SLA research. According to these authors, the first step was to make sure that our questionnaire contained the appropriate content, as it was only this way we could actually obtain the information we were looking for. For that reason, we decided to base the items of our questionnaire in solid theoretical principles –namely the list of strategies for motivation of L2 students proposed by Dörnyei (1994a). This list of strategies, as we saw in section 1.2.2, was divided in three different categories: strategies related to the "language level", strategies related to the "learner level" and strategies related to the "learning situation level". The latter was

subdivided in the subcategories of "course-specific motivational components", "teacher-specific motivational components" and "group-specific motivational components". From the total of thirty strategies here compiled, we selected eleven of them –specifically those which we considered either more important or either more easily achievable in our proposal. As a result, we decided to measure the motivation potential of our proposal based on the fulfilment –or lack of fulfilment– of the following strategies:

"Language Level"

Strategy 1 – Include a sociocultural component in the L2 syllabus (Ex. Watching films or TV recordings, playing music in the L2, inviting interesting native speaking guests…).

Strategy 2 – Develop learners' cross-cultural awareness system, showing not only differences but similarities (making the L2 more familiar to students).

Strategy 3 – Promote student contact with L2 speakers (Ex. Organizing meetings with L2 speakers, organising school trips, exchanges…).

Strategy 4 – Develop learners' instrumental motivation by making students aware of the importance of the L2 in the world and in their lives.

"Learning Situation Level - Course-specific motivational components"

Strategy 5 – Make the syllabus of the course relevant by trying to meet with it student's needs (Carry out needs analysis and involve students in the planning).

Strategy 6 – Increase attractiveness of the course content by using authentic materials, unusual and exotic supplementary materials, recordings, visual aids and so on.

Strategy 7 – Arouse and sustain curiosity and attention by introducing unexpected, novel, unfamiliar events (Ex. Changing people's seats, changing the order of events in the classroom).

Strategy 8 – Increase students' interest and involvement in the task by designing and selecting varied and challenging activities, adapting tasks to students' interests, including new elements every time, proposing game-like tasks, leaving activities open-ended, personalising tasks so that students engage in meaningful interactions…

Strategy 9 – Match difficulty of tasks with students' abilities.

Strategy 10 – Increase student expectancy of task fulfilment by helping them on their performance (Ex. Familiarising them with the task, guiding them about procedures and strategies involved…).

> Strategy 11 – Facilitate student satisfaction by allowing students to create finished products that they can perform or display, letting them know their achievements and celebrating success.
> (Adapted from Dörnyei, 1994a).

These strategies, as we can observe, came exclusively from the language level and the learning situation level –course-specific motivational component. This can be explained due to the fact that, as we previously anticipated, the aim of our proposal was to introduce change through materials and tasks. Therefore, trying to change the role of learners, teachers and the group altogether was not our goal, at least in a purposeful manner.

Once the strategies behind our questionnaire were selected, it was time to create questionnaire items that could effectively represent them. In order to do so, we followed Dörnyei and Csizér's (2012) advice, who stated that more than one item per content area should be proposed in order to avoid that the actual wording of items could have a negative influence on participants' answers. For that reason, we proposed a list of ten to four items per strategy that could be easily adaptable to the three points of views that we wanted to research: the interest of participants in these strategies, the degree to which participants considered that they were enforcing such strategies in their *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes, and the degree to which our proposal fulfilled these strategies. Potential items of our questionnaires, thus, had a multifaceted nature –they were slightly modified to imply that they were considered interesting, that they were achieved in the classroom and that they were achieved during the treatment– and, at the same time, they also attempted to comply with the appropriate format of a questionnaire: they were short and simple, they used natural language –avoiding ambiguous or loaded words and sentences–, and they avoided problematic constructions –i.e. negative constructions or double-barrelled questions. Nevertheless, in order to make sure that items were as effective as we thought and in order to reduce this list to two or three items per strategy –since questionnaires should be as short as possible in order that participants were not discouraged by their length (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2012)–, we decided to hand this draft questionnaire to two experts on the field in order to get some enriching feedback on which items to keep. Once this issue was discussed with them, we finally obtained a list of 27 items which were specifically chosen –or adapted in case it was necessary– for them to shape an effective motivation questionnaire. Items of each strategy, which were mixed up in the questionnaire in order that students did not reply to them in the same way as a pattern, were allocated like this:

	Interests (Pre-Questionnaire)	Achievements in the classroom (Pre-Questionnaire)	Achievements during the treatment (Post-questionnaire)
Strategy 1	Items 5, 19 and 23	Items 32, 46 and 50	Items 5, 19 and 23
Strategy 2	Items 20 and 27	Items 47 and 54	Items 20 and 27
Strategy 3	Items 4 and 23	Items 31 and 50	Items 4 and 23
Strategy 4	Items 1, 9 and 26	Items 28, 36 and 53	Items 1, 9 and 26
Strategy 5	Items 16, 17 and 18	Items 43, 44 and 45	Items 16, 17 and 18
Strategy 6	Items 11, 13 and 21	Items 38, 40 and 48	Items 11, 13 and 21
Strategy 7	Items 8 and 14	Items 35 and 41	Items 8 and 14
Strategy 8	Items 10, 12 and 22	Items 37, 39 and 49	Items 10, 12 and 22
Strategy 9	Items 2 and 15	Items 29 and 42	Items 2 and 15
Strategy 10	Items 3, 7 and 24	Items 30, 34 and 51	Items 3, 7 and 24
Strategy 11	Items 6 and 25	Items 33 and 52	Items 6 and 25

Table 6. Allocation of items of the motivation questionnaire to our selection of motivation strategies.

After all the items of our pre and post motivation questionnaire were decided, both questionnaires were translated into Spanish in order that the quality of the obtained data improved (Dörnyei and Csizér, 2012) and items were presented on a Likert scale –participants had to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on a scale of 1 to 5, one being totally disagree and 5 totally agree. Then, questionnaires were subsequently tested with two trial groups so that we could not only rehearse administration procedures and timings, but also so that we could check if expected findings could emerge from these questionnaires. In this case, students only had the chance to test the pre-questionnaire, as they did not take the treatment and, therefore, they could not know to what degree the treatment complied with the proposed strategies. However, results obtained in the pre-questionnaire proved to be what we had hypothesized and thus they showed that our questionnaire served to our expected purposes:

1) That students found the proposed strategies and topics interesting in general.

2) That there was a significant difference between what students found interesting and what they were actually doing in the *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes.

3) That there was room for improvement regarding their motivation.

Descriptive data – Questionnaire pilot study

		Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Degree of interest in strategies	43	2,87	4,41	3,76	0,36
Degree of compliance in the *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes	43	1,97	4,16	3,05	0,55
N valid	43				

Table 7. Motivation questionnaire trial – Descriptive data.

Descriptive data – Topics of interest

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Topics of interest	43	1,83	4,67	3,49	0,56
N valid	43				

Table 8. Motivation questionnaire trial – Topics of interest.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Degree of interest in strategies – Degree of compliance in the *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes	,71	,56	,08	,53	,88	8,29	42	,00

Table 9. Motivation questionnaire trial – T-test measuring significant difference between what participants find interesting and what they actually do in class.

Assuming that these questionnaires complied with their purposes and that they could be considered valid and reliable, we administered them before and after the treatment. Participants had to complete them anonymously in order that they could express their opinions freely and results were collected merging items into their broader categories –our eleven strategies– for a separate analysis: as questionnaires were anonymous, they could not be analysed together with participants' performance tests.

The last instrument we used in this pilot study was a background information report. This report was, in turn, divided into two different instruments: a report completed by students participating in the study and a report completed by their teachers. The first report started by asking participants direct questions about their socio-economic background –i.e. students were asked what the level of schooling of their parents was and whether they (or their parents) were immigrants or not– in order to know more about their context. Moreover, this first report also included questions about the relationship of participants with English –i.e. years that they had studied the language, their perceived level, their degree of interest, their chances of using the language outside the classroom or their use of ICTs to this purpose. The second report, on the other hand, asked teachers of the groups about each of the participants' performance –in that academic year, in that subject and in their regular English classes if they took them– as well as about participants' perceived participation level, attention degree, motivation, effort and performance. In both cases, items that did not have an objective answer were presented on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant a little and 5 meant a lot. All these data was then filed together with the results of the listening, speaking and pronunciation pre/post-test in order to eventually discern whether there were any correlations among variables.

3.3.4.2.3 Planning of the pilot study

Once all the tests, questionnaires and reports were designed and once we obtained the approval of schools and university to carry out our study, we devised an implementation planning based on the availability of groups to participate in the project –namely the hours of tuition of the *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* course, which represented four classes of 50-55 minutes a week:

School 1

	Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**	**Session 4**
Week 1	Speaking pre-test	Speaking pre-test	Speaking pre-test	- Listening pre-test - Pre-motivation questionnaire
Week 2	Treatment – Videos Teaching Unit, Session 1	Treatment – Videos Teaching Unit, Session 2	Treatment – Videos Teaching Unit, Session 3	Treatment – Videos Teaching Unit, Session 4
Week 3	Treatment – Videos Teaching Unit, Session 5	Speaking post-test	Speaking post-test	Speaking post-test

Week 4	- Listening post-test - Post-motivation questionnaire - Background			

Table 10. Planning of implementation – School 1

School 2

	Session 1	**Session 2**	**Session 3**	**Session 4**
Week 1	Speaking pre-test	Speaking pre-test	Speaking pre-test	- Listening pre-test - Pre-motivation questionnaire
Week 2	Treatment – Blogs & Podcasts Teaching Unit, Session 1	Treatment – Blogs & Podcasts Teaching Unit, Session 2	Treatment – Blogs & Podcasts Teaching Unit, Session 3	Treatment – Blogs & Podcasts Teaching Unit, Session 4
Week 3	Speaking post-test	Speaking post-test	Speaking post-test	- Listening post-test - Post-motivation questionnaire - Background reports

Table 11. Planning of implementation – School 2

As we can see in the charts above, the implementation of both teaching units in the two participating schools was very similar: the performance pre-tests and the motivation pre-questionnaire were carried out during the first week; then the treatment was implemented on the week right after –although, in the case of school 1, the treatment was carried out in five rather than in four sessions given that the subtitle workshop took two sessions–; and finally the performance post-tests, the post-motivation questionnaire and the background reports were completed during the third and fourth weeks. This implementation pilot study was planned this way in order that the potential improvement registered could be only explained through the success of our innovative teaching units. In order to control other potentially influential variables

–such as teachers' role and management of the classroom–, it was the researcher who presented pre and post-tests/questionnaires, and tasks and activities in both groups, as it was only this way we could control a minimal interference in students' work which, in case it existed, it would be the same in both cases. Furthermore, presenting the tasks and activities ourselves also enabled us to guarantee that they were being appropriately carried out within time and space limits.

3.3.4.3 Results and Discussion

After these two teaching units were implemented and improvement and motivation rates were measured before and after them, the assessment of data was inserted in two SPSS files in order to carry out all suitable statistical tests and analysis: one where listening, speaking and pronunciation scores were registered together with all the information from the background reports and another one where the scores of the motivation pre and post questionnaires were introduced.

Regarding listening, speaking and pronunciation scores, our aim was to analyse whether there had been an improvement from the pre-test to the post-test –an improvement that could be explained as a result of implementing the treatment. Having a look at results from a descriptive point of view, we could already anticipate that results had been better in the post-test:

Statistics

		Results Listening Pre-Test	Results Speaking Pre-Test	Results Pronunciation Pre-Test	Results Listening Post-Test	Results Speaking Post-Test	Results Pronunciation Post-Test
N	Valid	37	37	37	37	37	37
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		5,88	5,80	6,39	6,17	5,99	6,74
Median		5,6	6,25	6,33	5,6	5,88	6,67
Mode		3,20[a]	8	6,33	4,8	5,5	6,67
Std. Deviation		2,11	2,04	0,92	1,74	1,98	1,24

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 12. Efficiency tests – Descriptive data on the listening, speaking and pronunciation tests.

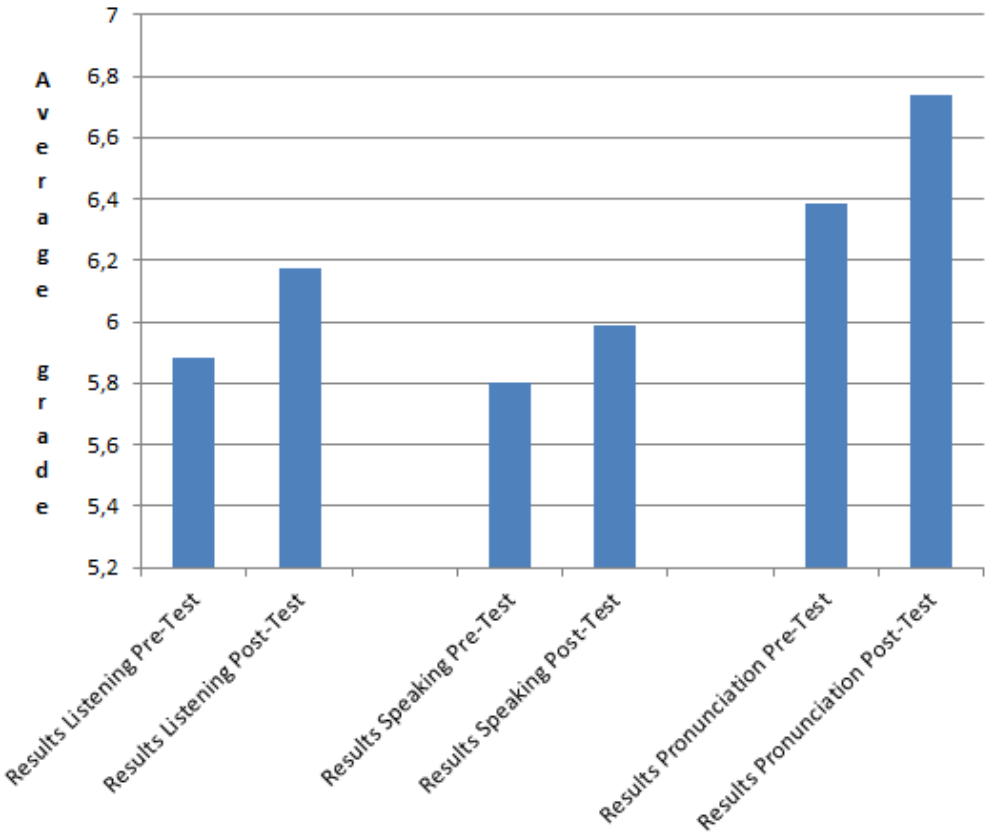

Figure 8. Chart comparing results in the pre and post-tests.

As we can see in the chart and in the graph, the average score of participants in the three tests –listening, speaking and pronunciation– was higher in the post than in the pre-test, even if this was not always the case if we paid attention to the median and the mode.

Taking into account this general improvement, our first reaction was to try to prove if this difference in scores between the pre and the post tests could be considered significant and generalizable to the whole population –even if we were aware of how difficult that was, as the treatment had been too short to trigger this type of results. In order to carry out these tests, the first thing we had to do was to see if our population had a normal distribution and, thus, we carried out the pertinent tests to this purpose.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Results Listening Pre-Test	0,09	37	,20	0,97	37	0,35
Results Speaking Pre-Test	0,12	37	0,19	0,92	37	0,01
Results Pronunciation Pre-Test	0,1	37	,20	0,98	37	0,58
Results Listening Post-Test	0,17	37	0,01	0,94	37	0,03
Results Speaking Post-Test	0,13	37	0,13	0,94	37	0,06
Results Pronunciation Post-Test	0,07	37	,20	0,99	37	0,96
Difference in scores in Listening	0,13	37	0,12	0,96	37	0,24
Difference in scores in Speaking	0,10	37	,20	0,96	37	0,18
Difference in scores in Pronunciation	0,14	37	0,09	0,97	37	0,40

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 13. Tests of normality.

Since the sample we were working with was of less than 50 participants, in order to see the normal distribution we had a look at the Shapiro-Wilk test and its levels of significance. According to this test, our sample presented a normal distribution in most cases, as the significance level was usually higher than 0,05 –most specifically regarding the results of the listening pre-test, of the pronunciation pre-test, of the speaking post-test and of the pronunciation post-test and also regarding the difference in scores in all tests. This could also be seen in the following graphs:

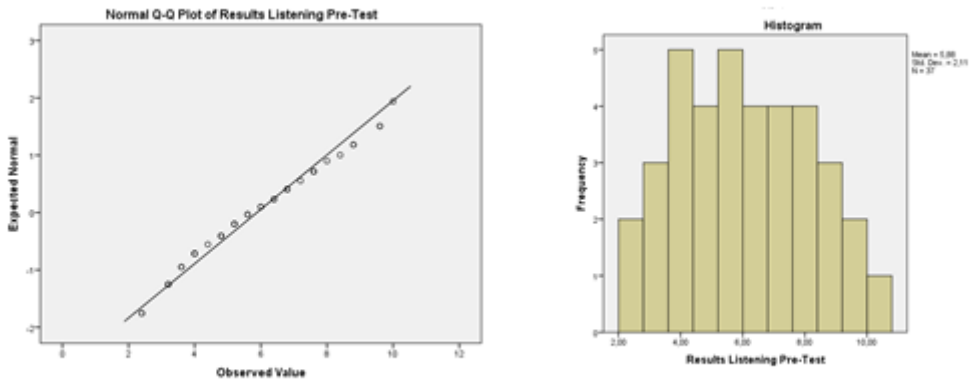

Figure 9. Normality graphs – Listening pre-test

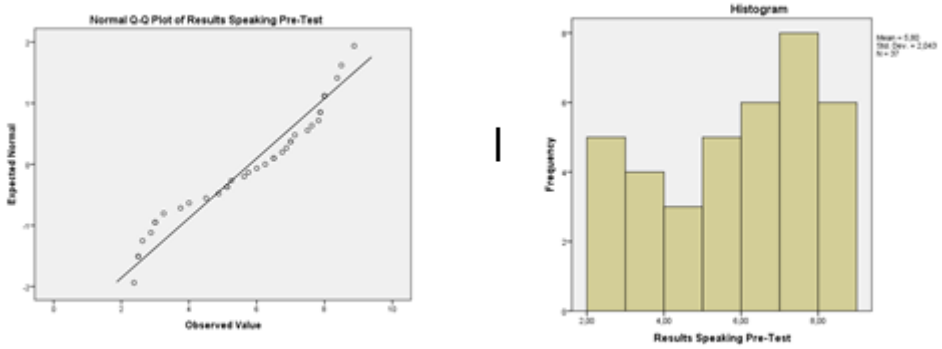

Figure 10. Normality graphs – Speaking pre-test

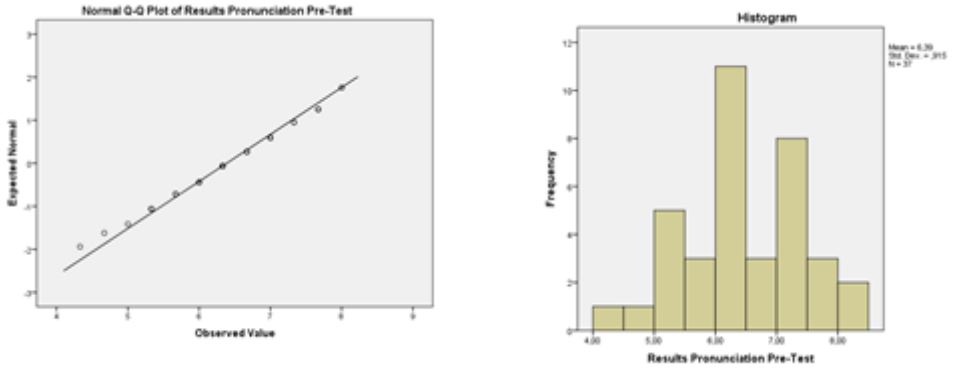

Figure 11. Normality graphs – Pronunciation pre-test

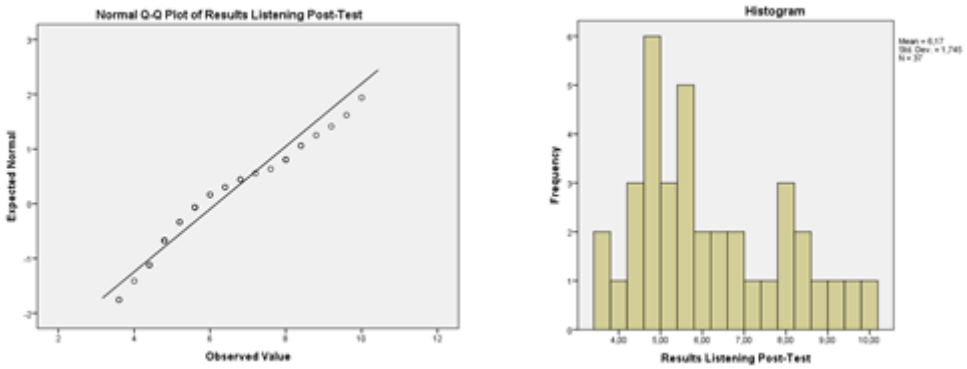

Figure 12. Normality graphs – Listening post-test

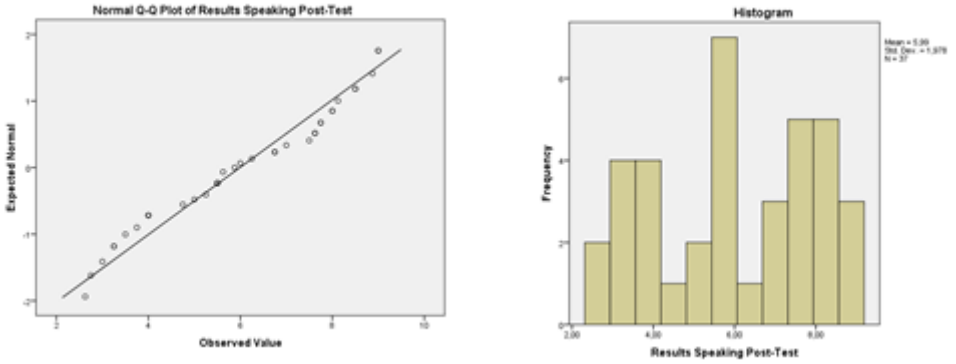

Figure 13. Normality graphs – Speaking post-test

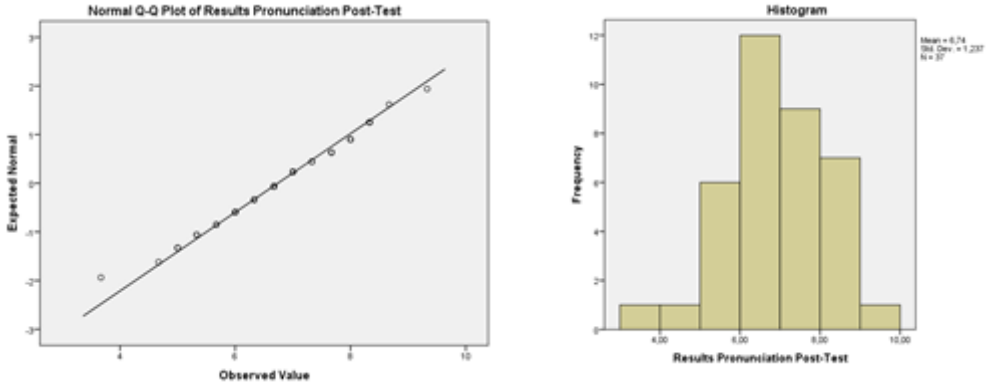

Figure 14. Normality graphs – Pronunciation post-test

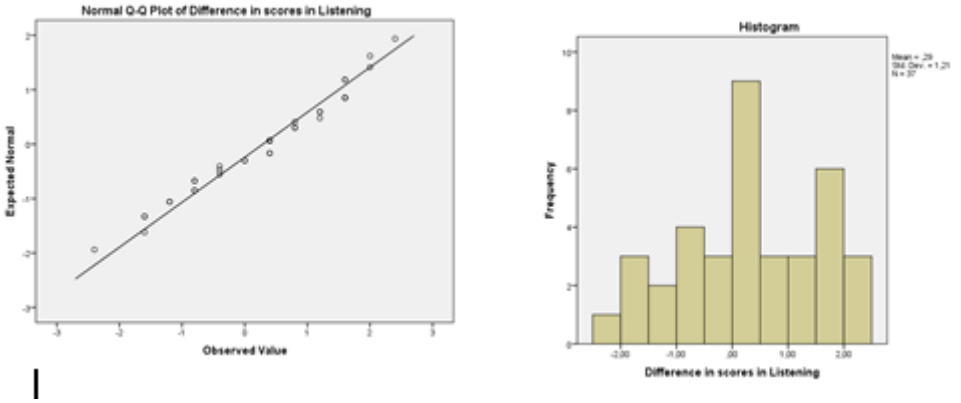

Figure 15. Normality graphs – Difference in scores in Listening

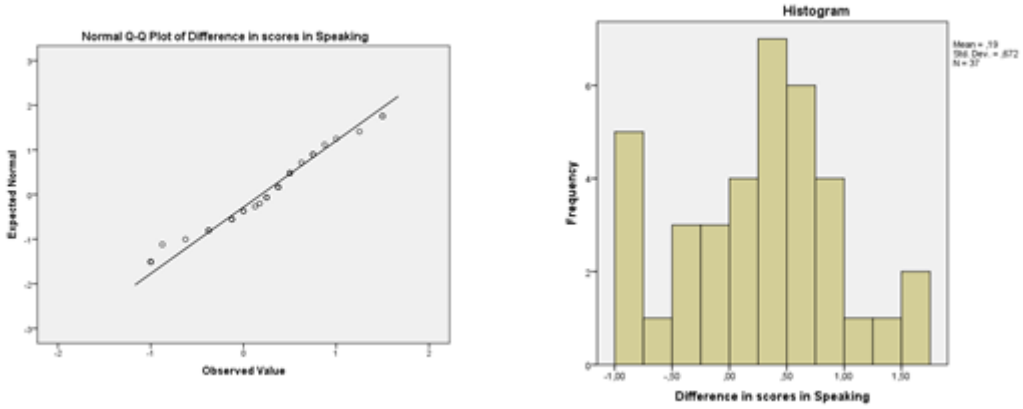

Figure 16. Normality graphs – Difference in scores in Speaking

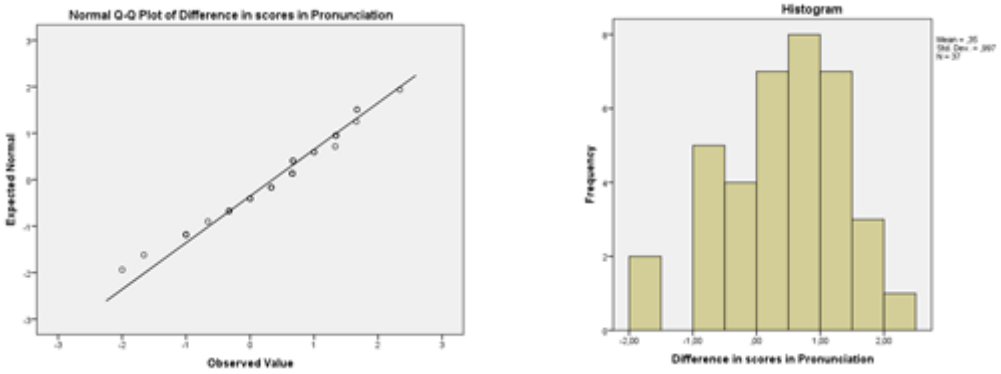

Figure 17. Normality graphs – Difference in scores in Pronunciation

Taking these results into account, we considered our sample normal and thus we used a paired samples T-test to see if there was any significant difference between scores before and after the treatment –we measured the level of our sample in two different conditions (without treatment and with treatment) in order to see if there were generalizable improvements.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Results Listening Pre-Test - Results Listening Post-Test	-,29	1,20	,19	-,69	,11	-1,46	36	,151
Pair 2	Results Speaking Pre-Test - Results Speaking Post-Test	-,19054	,67153	,11040	-,41444	,03336	-1,726	36	,093
Pair 3	Results Pronunciation Pre-Test - Results Pronunciation Post-Test	-,35189	,99674	,16386	-,68422	-,01956	-2,147	36	,039

Table 14. Efficiency tests – T-test comparing results in the pre and post-tests.

According to these tests, we could see that there was only a significant difference regarding improvements in pronunciation, since α< 0,05: H1 is valid. That would mean that our treatment enhanced students to make a significant improvement regarding their pronunciation skills, but not regarding thei ¨ctening aı ' speaking ¯kills.

In case this paired sample test was not powerful enough to show significance and considering that our sample did not show a normal distribution in either one of the pre or of the post tests of listening and speaking, we decided to try with non-parametrical tests –namely the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Test Statistics[a]

	Results Listening Post-Test - Results Listening Pre-Test	Results Speaking Post-Test - Results Speaking Pre-Test	Results Pronunciation Post-Test - Results Pronunciation Pre-Test
Z	-1,43[b]	-1,7[b]	-2,12[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,15	,09	,03

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

Table 15. Efficiency tests –Wilcoxon test comparing results in the pre and post-tests.

Sadly, results showed that, once more, the only significant difference in performance was regarding students' pronunciation skills, which made therefore clear that our treatment only proved to significantly modify students' pronunciation skills and not their listening or speaking skills.

Nevertheless, we must not forget that we had already hypothesized that, given the short duration of this specific treatment, it was very difficult to promote significant improvements among students –and the fact that we could find them regarding pronunciation was indeed more than great news, as it is surprisingly positive that a one-week treatment was able to promote such improvements. For that reason, and taking into account that with this pilot study we only wanted to test the potential of these materials and their accompanying tasks, we decided to go back to descriptive statistics and further explore the observed improvement in all fields.

As we had previously seen, even if there was not a significant improvement in all fields –only in pronunciation–, the truth is that there was an improvement in all cases.

Statistics

		Difference in scores in Listening	Difference in scores in Speaking	Difference in scores in Pronunciation
N	Valid	37	37	37
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		,29	,19	,35
Median		,40	,25	,66
Mode		,40	,50	,66

Table 16. Efficiency tests – Descriptive data on difference in scores.

Regarding participants' listening skills, for example, students improved on average 0.29 points (an improvement of 2.9%), with the median being around 0.4 and the most popular improvement being 0.4 points as well. Concerning participants' speaking skills, the average improvement was 0.19 points (1.9%), the median was on 0.25 and the most popular improvement was of 0.50 points. Finally, pronunciation scores improved on average on 0.35 points (3.5%), with the median and the mode being 0.66 points.

If we think about it, the fact that students were improving on average from a 2 to 3.5% –and that the most common improvement was of around 0.5/10 points– in only one week was actually quite positive. Let us just think: if we could observe this improvement in only one week, what kind of improvement could we observe in a complete term? And what about in an academic year? To this matter, it would be too simplistic to assume a linear progression –i.e. if participants improve their listening skills a 2.9% in one week, they could actually improve a 34.8% in twelve weeks (a term) and 107% in an academic year (37 weeks)–. We must not forget that "the learning curve plotting performance against amount of experience with the task is an accelerating non-linear curve, best described by the mathematical power-law function" (Ninio, 2006:5) –that is, that even if the rule is that skilled tasks get better with practice (with improvement being rapid at the beginning), the truth is that at a certain point improvement rates decrease.

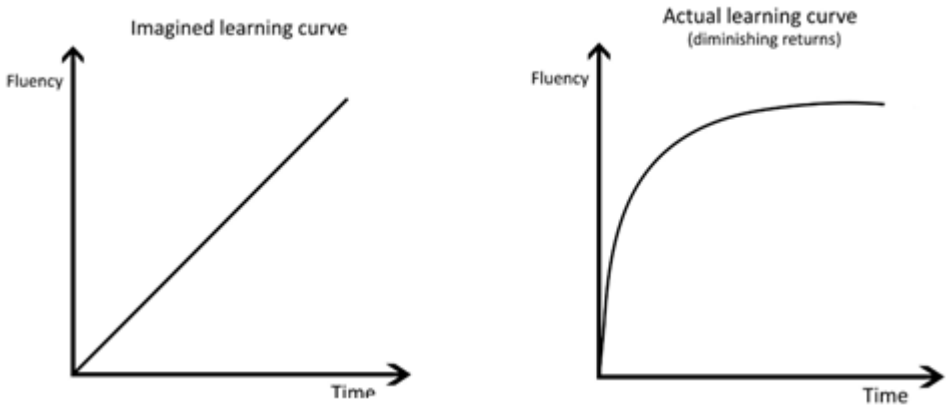

Figure 18. Imagined and actual learning curve

This, however, does not diminish the important effect of our treatment in our participants, as it made them improve more than enough in one week and it could eventually lead them towards great improvements –improvements that we cannot actually quantify but that could be further analysed in future research.

Particularly interesting were also the results obtained from a small section of the motivation post-questionnaire, where students had the assess from 1 to 5 each of the activities they had carried out regarding their potential to improve listening, speaking and pronunciation skills.

Potential development of oral skills

	Listening	Speaking	Pronunciation
Teaching Unit 1, Task 1	3.29/5	3.38/5	3.19/5
Teaching Unit 1, Task 2	3.52/5	3.14/5	3.48/5
Teaching Unit 1, Task 3	3.33/5	3.33/5	3.24/5
Teaching Unit 1, Task 4	3.62/5	3.48/5	3.33/5
Teaching Unit 2, Task 1	3.88/5	4/5	3.76/5
Teaching Unit 2, Task 2	3.82/5	3.82/5	3.59/5
Teaching Unit 2, Task 3	3.7/5	4.06/5	3.94/5
Teaching Unit 2, Task 4	3.82/5	4.35/5	4.06/5

Table 17. Motivation questionnaire – Potential efficiency of tasks to improve oral skills according to participants.

After analysing this part of the questionnaire, we came to the conclusion that all tasks were positively valued in all the areas (mean score always above 3/5), even if some of them stood out in certain skills over the rest. In the first teaching unit –the one using videos–, for example, the subtitle workshop was the task that scored the highest concerning the development of students' listening and speaking skills. This may be due to the fact that it entailed extensive listening practice that students could manage on their own and because the problem-solving structure of this exercise made them discuss in English in a meaningful context. Pronunciation, however, was perceived to be more promoted in task number two, where students had to watch an extract of the film *Bend it like Beckham*, which allowed them to be in touch with a great variety of accents. Regarding the second teaching unit –the one where we used blogs and podcasts–, task number four, where students had to record their own commercials, was the best task for the improvement of speaking and pronunciation according to participants –maybe because they had to try to imitate those commercials as much as possible, which triggered a lot of attention on pronunciation and speaking patterns. On the other hand, listening skills were considered to be improved more or less to the same degree in all tasks, although results were slightly higher in task number one, where students had to listen to news broadcast, maybe an easier genre to practice this skill (i.e. pace, vocabulary and so on).

Finally, we decided to have a look at correlations between results before and after the treatment and all the other background data collected in order to see if there were any relationships worth exploring.

Correlations

		Results Listening Pre-Test	Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Mark in English	Global mark of the course	Years studying English	Socio-ecomomic level	Self-assessment of their level of English	Interest in English	Perspectives to use English in the future	Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Use of ICTs to learn English	Knowledge of other foreign languages	Participation level	Attention degree in the classroom	Motivation level according to the teacher	Degree of effort in the classroom	General performance in the APLE
Results Listening Pre-Test	Pearson Correlation	1	,358*	,619**	,430**	,203	,213	,772**	,444**	,468**	,542**	,546**	,391*	,176	,122	,134	,141	,369*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,030	,001	,008	,251	,226	,000	,009	,005	,001	,001	,022	,296	,473	,429	,404	,025
	N	37	37	37	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Pearson Correlation	,358*	1	,539**	,710**	,178	,099	,396*	,201	,235	,199	,045	,252	,366*	,494**	,443**	,485**	,567**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,030		,004	,000	,313	,577	,020	,255	,181	,267	,805	,151	,026	,002	,006	,002	,000
	N	37	37	37	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Mark in English	Pearson Correlation	,619**	,539**	1	,853**	,380*	-,097	,903**	,665**	,682**	,430*	,350*	,421*	,157	,337*	,308	,365*	,417*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,004		,000	,073	,681	,000	,001	,000	,046	,102	,045	,444	,092	,125	,067	,034
	N	26	26	26	26	23	23	23	23	23	22	23	23	26	26	26	26	26
Global mark of the course	Pearson Correlation	,430**	,710**	,853**	1	,308	,179	,587**	,408*	,512**	,321	,127	,327	,279	,506**	,448**	,465**	,532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,008	,000	,000		,076	,310	,000	,017	,002	,068	,482	,059	,094	,001	,005	,004	,001
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Years studying English	Pearson Correlation	,203	,178	,380	,308	1	,034	,277	,155	-,079	,287	,124	,074	,007	-,082	,134	-,059	,040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,251	,313	,073	,076		,850	,113	,382	,659	,105	,493	,677	,970	,646	,450	,739	,823
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Socio-ecomomic level	Pearson Correlation	,213	,099	-,097	,179	,034	1	,132	,042	,126	,091	,022	,196	,008	,017	-,096	,100	,008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,226	,577	,661	,310	,850		,458	,812	,476	,614	,901	,267	,966	,926	,588	,574	,965
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Self-assessment of their level of English	Pearson Correlation	,772**	,396*	,903**	,587**	,277	,132	1	,648**	,690**	,526**	,540**	,476**	,074	,069	-,006	,131	,362*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,020	,000	,000	,113	,458		,000	,000	,002	,001	,004	,676	,699	,971	,460	,035
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Interest in English	Pearson Correlation	,444**	,201	,665**	,408*	,155	,042	,648**	1	,828**	,558**	,584**	,478**	,194	,146	,050	,239	,290
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,009	,255	,001	,017	,382	,812	,000		,000	,001	,000	,004	,273	,410	,778	,173	,096
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Perspectives to use English in the future	Pearson Correlation	,468**	,235	,682**	,512**	-,079	,126	,690**	,828**	1	,509**	,589**	,704**	,234	,214	,014	,279	,290
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,005	,181	,000	,002	,659	,476	,000	,000		,002	,000	,000	,183	,225	,937	,110	,096
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,542**	,199	,430*	,321	,287	,091	,526**	,558**	,509**	1	,704**	,404*	,220	,016	,128	,127	,126
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,267	,046	,068	,105	,614	,002	,001	,002		,000	,020	,218	,931	,478	,480	,483
	N	33	33	22	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33
Use of ICTs to learn English	Pearson Correlation	,546**	,045	,350	,127	,124	,022	,540**	,584**	,589**	,704**	1	,378*	,043	-,160	-,152	-,071	-,032
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,805	,102	,482	,493	,901	,001	,000	,000	,000		,030	,811	,374	,398	,694	,860
	N	33	33	23	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Knowledge of other foreign languages	Pearson Correlation	,391*	,252	,421*	,327	,074	,196	,476**	,478**	,376*	,404*	,378*	1	,252	,026	,096	,088	,183
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,022	,151	,045	,059	,677	,267	,004	,004	,029	,020	,030		,151	,885	,588	,623	,300
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Participation level	Pearson Correlation	,176	,366*	,157	,279	,007	,008	,074	,194	,234	,220	,043	,252	1	,333*	,483**	,348*	,388*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,296	,026	,444	,094	,970	,966	,676	,273	,183	,218	,811	,151		,044	,002	,035	,018
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Attention degree in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,122	,494**	,337	,506**	-,082	,017	,069	,146	,214	,016	-,160	,026	,333*	1	,794**	,881**	,782**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,473	,002	,092	,001	,646	,926	,699	,410	,225	,931	,374	,885	,044		,000	,000	,000
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Motivation level according to the teacher	Pearson Correlation	,134	,443**	,308	,448**	,134	-,096	-,006	,050	,014	,128	-,152	,096	,483**	,794**	1	,745**	,674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,429	,006	,125	,005	,450	,588	,971	,778	,937	,478	,398	,588	,002	,000		,000	,000
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Degree of effort in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,141	,485**	,365*	,465**	-,059	,100	,131	,239	,279	,127	-,071	,088	,348*	,881**	,745**	1	,743**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,404	,002	,067	,004	,739	,574	,460	,173	,110	,480	,694	,623	,035	,000	,000		,000
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
General performance in the APLE	Pearson Correlation	,369*	,567**	,417*	,532**	,040	,008	,362*	,290	,290	,126	-,032	,183	,388*	,782**	,674**	,743**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,025	,000	,034	,001	,823	,965	,035	,096	,096	,483	,860	,300	,018	,000	,000	,000	
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 18. Correlation with results in the Listening pre-test

Table 19. Correlation with results in the Speaking pre-test

Correlations

		Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Mark in English	Global mark of the course	Years studying English	Socio-ecomomic level	Self-assessment of their level of English	Interest in English	Perspectives to use English in the future	Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Use of ICTs to learn English	Knowledge of other foreign languages	Participation level	Attention degree in the classroom	Motivation level according to the teacher	Degree of effort in the classroom	General performance in the APLE	Results Speaking Pre-Test
Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Pearson Correlation	1	,539**	,710**	,178	,099	,396*	,201	,235	,199	,045	,252	,366*	,494**	,443**	,485**	,567**	,301
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004	,000	,313	,577	,020	,255	,181	,267	,805	,151	,026	,002	,006	,002	,000	,071
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Mark in English	Pearson Correlation	,539**	1	,853**	,380	-,097	,903**	,665**	,682**	,430*	,350	,421*	,157	,337	,308	,365	,417*	,783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004		,000	,073	,661	,000	,001	,000	,046	,102	,045	,444	,092	,125	,067	,034	,000
	N	26	26	26	23	23	23	23	23	22	23	23	26	26	26	26	26	26
Global mark of the course	Pearson Correlation	,710**	,853**	1	,308	,179	,587**	,408*	,512**	,321	,127	,327	,279	,506**	,448**	,465**	,532**	,517**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,076	,310	,000	,017	,002	,068	,482	,059	,094	,001	,005	,004	,001	,001
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Years studying English	Pearson Correlation	,178	,380	,308	1	,034	,277	,155	-,079	,287	,124	,074	,007	-,082	,134	-,059	,040	,305
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,313	,073	,076		,850	,113	,382	,659	,105	,493	,677	,970	,646	,450	,739	,823	,079
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Socio-ecomomic level	Pearson Correlation	,099	-,097	,179	,034	1	,132	,042	,126	,091	,022	,196	,008	,017	-,096	,100	,008	,210
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,577	,661	,310	,850		,458	,812	,476	,614	,901	,267	,966	,926	,588	,574	,965	,234
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Self-assessment of their level of English	Pearson Correlation	,396*	,903**	,587**	,277	,132	1	,648**	,690**	,526**	,540**	,476**	,074	,069	-,006	,131	,362*	,816**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,020	,000	,000	,113	,458		,000	,000	,002	,001	,004	,676	,699	,971	,460	,035	,000
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Interest in English	Pearson Correlation	,201	,665**	,408*	,155	,042	,648**	1	,828**	,558**	,584**	,478**	,194	,146	,050	,239	,290	,671**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,255	,001	,017	,382	,812	,000		,000	,001	,000	,004	,273	,410	,778	,173	,096	,000
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Perspectives to use English in the future	Pearson Correlation	,235	,682**	,512**	-,079	,126	,690**	,828**	1	,509**	,589**	,376*	,234	,214	,014	,279	,290	,596**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,181	,000	,002	,659	,476	,000	,000		,002	,000	,029	,183	,225	,937	,110	,096	,000
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,199	,430*	,321	,287	,091	,526**	,558**	,509**	1	,704**	,404*	,220	,016	,128	,127	,126	,590**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,267	,046	,068	,105	,614	,002	,001	,002		,000	,020	,218	,931	,478	,480	,483	,000
	N	33	22	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Use of ICTs to learn English	Pearson Correlation	,045	,350	,127	,124	,022	,540**	,584**	,589**	,704**	1	,378*	,043	-,160	-,152	-,071	-,032	,511**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,805	,102	,482	,493	,901	,001	,000	,000	,000		,030	,811	,374	,398	,694	,860	,002
	N	33	23	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Knowledge of other foreign languages	Pearson Correlation	,252	,421*	,327	,074	,196	,476**	,478**	,376*	,404*	,378*	1	,252	,026	,096	,088	,183	,632**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,151	,045	,059	,677	,267	,004	,004	,029	,020	,030		,151	,885	,588	,623	,300	,000
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Participation level	Pearson Correlation	,366*	,157	,279	,007	,008	,074	,194	,234	,220	,043	,252	1	,333*	,483**	,348*	,388*	,145
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026	,444	,094	,970	,966	,676	,273	,183	,218	,811	,151		,044	,002	,035	,018	,392
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Attention degree in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,494**	,337	,506**	-,082	,017	,069	,146	,214	,016	-,160	,026	,333*	1	,794**	,881**	,782**	,119
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,092	,001	,646	,926	,699	,410	,225	,931	,374	,885	,044		,000	,000	,000	,482
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Motivation level according to the teacher	Pearson Correlation	,443**	,308	,448**	,134	-,096	-,006	,050	,014	,128	-,152	,096	,483**	,794**	1	,745**	,674**	,087
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,006	,125	,005	,450	,588	,971	,778	,937	,478	,398	,588	,002	,000		,000	,000	,609
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Degree of effort in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,485**	,365	,465**	-,059	,100	,131	,239	,279	,127	-,071	,088	,348*	,881**	,745**	1	,743**	,171
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,067	,004	,739	,574	,460	,173	,110	,480	,694	,623	,035	,000	,000		,000	,313
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
General performance in the APLE	Pearson Correlation	,567**	,417*	,532**	,040	,008	,362*	,290	,290	,126	-,032	,183	,388*	,782**	,674**	,743**	1	,359*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,034	,001	,823	,965	,035	,096	,096	,483	,860	,300	,018	,000	,000	,000		,029
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Results Speaking Pre-Test	Pearson Correlation	,301	,783**	,517**	,305	,210	,816**	,671**	,596**	,590**	,511**	,632**	,145	,119	,087	,171	,359*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,071	,000	,001	,079	,234	,000	,000	,000	,000	,002	,000	,392	,482	,609	,313	,029	
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Mark in English	Global mark of the course	Years studying English	Socio-ecomomic level	Self-assessment of their level of English	Interest in English	Perspectives to use English in the future	Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Use of ICTs to learn English	Knowledge of other foreign languages	Participation level	Attention degree in the classroom	Motivation level according to the teacher	Degree of effort in the classroom	General performance in the APLE	Results Pronunciation Pre-Test
Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Pearson Correlation	1	,539**	,710**	,178	,099	,396*	,201	,235	,199	,045	,252	,366*	,494**	,443**	,485**	,567**	,182
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004	,000	,313	,577	,020	,255	,181	,267	,805	,151	,026	,002	,006	,002	,000	,280
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Mark in English	Pearson Correlation	,539**	1	,853**	,380	-,097	,903**	,665**	,682**	,430*	,350	,421*	,157	,337	,308	,365	,417*	,276
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004		,000	,073	,661	,000	,001	,000	,046	,102	,045	,444	,092	,125	,067	,034	,172
	N	26	26	26	23	23	23	23	23	22	23	23	26	26	26	26	26	26
Global mark of the course	Pearson Correlation	,710**	,853**	1	,308	,179	,587**	,408*	,512**	,321	,127	,327	,279	,506**	,448**	,465**	,532**	,196
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,076	,310	,000	,017	,002	,068	,482	,059	,094	,001	,005	,004	,001	,246
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Years studying English	Pearson Correlation	,178	,380	,308	1	,034	,277	,155	-,079	,287	,124	,074	,007	-,082	,134	-,059	,040	-,118
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,313	,073	,076		,850	,113	,382	,659	,105	,493	,677	,970	,646	,450	,739	,823	,508
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Socio-ecomomic level	Pearson Correlation	,099	-,097	,179	,034	1	,132	,042	,126	,091	,022	,196	,008	,017	-,096	,100	,008	,275
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,577	,661	,310	,850		,458	,812	,476	,614	,901	,267	,966	,926	,588	,574	,965	,116
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Self-assessment of their level of English	Pearson Correlation	,396*	,903**	,587**	,277	,132	1	,848**	,690**	,526**	,540**	,476**	,074	,069	-,006	,131	,362*	,215
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,020	,000	,000	,113	,458		,000	,000	,002	,001	,004	,676	,699	,971	,460	,035	,222
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Interest in English	Pearson Correlation	,201	,665**	,408*	,155	,042	,648**	1	,828**	,558**	,584**	,478**	,194	,146	,050	,239	,290	,315
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,255	,001	,017	,382	,812	,000		,000	,001	,000	,004	,273	,410	,778	,173	,096	,069
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Perspectives to use English in the future	Pearson Correlation	,235	,682**	,512**	-,079	,126	,690**	,828**	1	,509**	,589**	,376*	,234	,214	,014	,279	,290	,334
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,181	,000	,002	,659	,476	,000	,000		,002	,000	,029	,183	,225	,937	,110	,096	,054
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,199	,430*	,321	,267	,091	,526**	,558**	,509**	1	,704**	,404*	,220	,016	,128	,127	,126	,375*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,267	,046	,068	,105	,614	,002	,001	,002		,000	,020	,218	,931	,478	,480	,483	,031
	N	33	22	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Use of ICTs to learn English	Pearson Correlation	,045	,350	,127	,124	,022	,540**	,584**	,589**	,704**	1	,378*	,043	-,160	,152	-,071	-,032	,173
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,805	,102	,482	,493	,901	,001	,000	,000	,000		,030	,811	,374	,398	,694	,860	,336
	N	33	23	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Knowledge of other foreign languages	Pearson Correlation	,252	,421*	,327	,074	,196	,476**	,478**	,376*	,404*	,378*	1	,252	,026	,096	,088	,183	,394*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,151	,045	,059	,677	,267	,004	,004	,029	,020	,030		,151	,885	,588	,623	,300	,021
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Participation level	Pearson Correlation	,366*	,157	,279	,007	,008	,074	,194	,234	,220	,043	,252	1	,333*	,483**	,348*	,388*	-,027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026	,444	,094	,970	,966	,676	,273	,183	,218	,811	,151		,044	,002	,035	,018	,872
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Attention degree in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,494**	,337	,506**	-,082	,017	,069	,146	,214	,016	-,160	,026	,333*	1	,794**	,881**	,782**	,002
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,092	,001	,646	,926	,699	,410	,225	,931	,374	,885	,044		,000	,000	,000	,989
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Motivation level according to the teacher	Pearson Correlation	,443**	,308	,448**	,134	-,096	-,006	,050	,014	,128	-,152	,096	,483**	,794**	1	,745**	,674**	-,169
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,006	,125	,005	,450	,588	,971	,778	,937	,478	,398	,588	,002	,000		,000	,000	,318
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Degree of effort in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,485**	,365	,465**	-,059	,100	,131	,239	,279	,127	-,071	,088	,348*	,881**	,745**	1	,743**	,028
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,067	,004	,739	,574	,460	,173	,110	,480	,694	,623	,035	,000	,000		,000	,868
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
General performance in the APLE	Pearson Correlation	,567**	,417*	,532**	,040	,008	,362*	,290	,290	,126	-,032	,183	,388*	,782**	,674**	,743**	1	-,044
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,034	,001	,823	,965	,035	,096	,096	,483	,860	,300	,018	,000	,000	,000		,794
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Results Pronunciation Pre-Test	Pearson Correlation	,182	,276	,196	-,118	,275	,215	,315	,334	,375*	,173	,394*	-,027	,002	-,169	,028	-,044	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,280	,172	,246	,508	,116	,222	,069	,054	,031	,336	,021	,872	,989	,318	,868	,794	
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 20. Correlation with results in the Pronunciation pre-test

When we had a look at correlations regarding students' performance in their listening pre-test and their background information, we realized that results correlated significantly high regarding students' mark in their English classes with a .62 coefficient in the Pearson test, something that was easily understandable– if participants are good performers in their English classes, it is common sense that they will do better than the rest in a test like this one. Nevertheless, it must be noted down that not all students were taking this subject, as the ones in the bilingual program took German instead of English –so the correlation refers only to those taking this subject. In the same line, results in the listening pre-test significantly correlated with participants' global mark during that academic year (a coefficient of .43 in the Pearson test), a result that once more supported the fact that good students tend to perform better. Results in the listening pre-test also correlated high concerning participants' interest in English (coefficient of .44), concerning their perspectives to use English in the future (coefficient of .47), concerning their possibilities to use English outside the classroom (coefficient of .54), concerning the way the self-assessed their level of English (coefficient of .77), and concerning the degree to which they used ICTs to improve their English (coefficient of .55). For that reason, we can assume that all of these factors are important when explaining participants' performance in a PET listening test.

Moving on to the correlations regarding participants' performance in the speaking pre-test and their background information, results obtained were very similar to the one previously presented. First of all, results in the speaking pre-test correlated significantly high with the students' mark in English (coefficient of .78 in the Pearson test) and with their global mark of that academic year (coefficient of .52), something which made us assume once more that good performers tend to do better in this type of tests. Results, as with the listening pre-test, also correlated significantly high regarding participants' interest in English (coefficient of .67), their perspectives to use English in the future (coefficient of .6), their possibilities to use English outside the classroom (coefficient of .59), the way the self-assessed their level of English (coefficient of .82), and the degree to which they used ICTs to improve their English (coefficient of .51). The only difference was that, in this case, results also correlated significantly high with the degree of knowledge of another foreign language (coefficient of .62), something which made us assume that the more they mastered other foreign languages, the better they did on the PET speaking test.

Finally, correlations concerning participants' performance in the pronunciation pre-test did not show any significant results. They only did regarding participants' possibilities to use English outside the classroom and regarding their degree of knowledge of other foreign languages if we used a 0.05 significance level.

Table 21. Correlation with Difference in Scores in the Listening tests

Correlations

		Difference in scores in Listening	Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Mark in English	Global mark of the course	Years studying English	Socio-ecomomic level	Self-assessment of their level of English	Interest in English	Perspectives to use English in the future	Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Use of ICTs to learn English	Knowledge of other foreign languages	Participation level	Attention degree in the classroom	Motivation level according to the teacher	Degree of effort in the classroom	General performance in the APLE
Difference in scores in Listening	Pearson Correlation	1	-,309	-,490*	-,209	-,150	,100	-,555**	-,404*	-,308	-,297	-,318	-,252	-,103	-,189	-,187	-,299	-,369*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,063	,011	,215	,398	,573	,001	,018	,077	,093	,072	,150	,544	,264	,268	,072	,025
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Pearson Correlation	-,309	1	,539**	,710**	,178	,099	,396*	,201	,235	,199	,045	,252	,366*	,494**	,443**	,485**	,567**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,063		,004	,000	,313	,577	,020	,255	,181	,267	,805	,151	,026	,002	,006	,002	,000
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Mark in English	Pearson Correlation	-,490*	,539**	1	,853**	,380	-,097	,903**	,665**	,682**	,430*	,350	,421*	,157	,337	,308	,365	,417*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,011	,004		,000	,073	,661	,000	,001	,000	,046	,102	,045	,444	,092	,125	,067	,034
	N	26	26	26	26	23	23	23	23	23	22	23	23	26	26	26	26	26
Global mark of the course	Pearson Correlation	-,209	,710**	,853**	1	,308	,179	,587**	,408*	,512**	,321	,127	,327	,279	,506**	,448**	,465**	,532**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,215	,000	,000		,076	,310	,000	,017	,002	,068	,482	,059	,094	,001	,005	,004	,001
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Years studying English	Pearson Correlation	-,150	,178	,380	,308	1	,034	,277	,155	-,079	,287	,124	,074	,007	-,082	,134	-,059	,040
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,398	,313	,073	,076		,850	,113	,382	,659	,105	,493	,677	,970	,646	,450	,739	,823
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Socio-ecomomic level	Pearson Correlation	,100	,099	-,097	,179	,034	1	,132	,042	,126	,091	,022	,196	,008	,017	-,096	,100	,008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,573	,577	,661	,310	,850		,458	,812	,476	,614	,901	,267	,966	,926	,588	,574	,965
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Self-assessment of their level of English	Pearson Correlation	-,555**	,396*	,903**	,587**	,277	,132	1	,648**	,690**	,526**	,540**	,476**	,074	,069	-,006	,131	,362*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	,020	,000	,000	,113	,458		,000	,000	,002	,001	,004	,676	,699	,971	,460	,035
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Interest in English	Pearson Correlation	-,404*	,201	,665**	,408*	,155	,042	,648**	1	,828**	,558**	,584**	,478**	,194	,146	,050	,239	,290
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,018	,255	,001	,017	,382	,812	,000		,000	,001	,000	,004	,273	,410	,778	,173	,096
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Perspectives to use English in the future	Pearson Correlation	-,308	,235	,682**	,512**	-,079	,126	,690**	,828**	1	,509**	,589**	,376*	,234	,214	,014	,279	,290
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,077	,181	,000	,002	,659	,476	,000	,000		,002	,000	,029	,183	,225	,937	,110	,096
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Pearson Correlation	-,297	,199	,430*	,321	,287	,091	,526**	,558**	,509**	1	,704**	,404*	,220	,016	,128	,127	,126
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,093	,267	,046	,068	,105	,614	,002	,001	,002		,000	,020	,218	,931	,478	,480	,483
	N	33	33	22	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33
Use of ICTs to learn English	Pearson Correlation	-,318	,045	,350	,127	,124	,022	,540**	,584**	,589**	,704**	1	,378*	,043	-,160	-,152	-,071	-,032
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,072	,805	,102	,482	,493	,901	,001	,000	,000	,000		,030	,811	,374	,398	,694	,860
	N	33	33	23	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Knowledge of other foreign languages	Pearson Correlation	-,252	,252	,421*	,327	,074	,196	,476**	,478**	,376*	,404*	,378*	1	,252	,026	,096	,088	,183
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,150	,151	,045	,059	,677	,267	,004	,004	,029	,020	,030		,151	,885	,588	,623	,300
	N	34	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34
Participation level	Pearson Correlation	-,103	,366*	,157	,279	,007	,008	,074	,194	,234	,220	,043	,252	1	,333*	,483**	,348*	,388*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,544	,026	,444	,094	,970	,966	,676	,273	,183	,218	,811	,151		,044	,002	,035	,018
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Attention degree in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	-,189	,494**	,337	,506**	-,082	,017	,069	,146	,214	,016	-,160	,026	,333*	1	,794**	,881**	,782**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,264	,002	,092	,001	,646	,926	,699	,410	,225	,931	,374	,885	,044		,000	,000	,000
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Motivation level according to the teacher	Pearson Correlation	-,187	,443**	,308	,448**	,134	-,096	-,006	,050	,014	,128	-,152	,096	,483**	,794**	1	,745**	,674**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,268	,006	,125	,005	,450	,588	,971	,778	,937	,478	,398	,588	,002	,000		,000	,000
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
Degree of effort in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	-,299	,485**	,365	,465**	-,059	,100	,131	,239	,279	,127	-,071	,088	,348*	,881**	,745**	1	,743**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,072	,002	,067	,004	,739	,574	,460	,173	,110	,480	,694	,623	,035	,000	,000		,000
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37
General performance in the APLE	Pearson Correlation	-,369*	,567**	,417*	,532**	,040	,008	,362*	,290	,290	,126	-,032	,183	,388*	,782**	,674**	,743**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,025	,000	,034	,001	,823	,965	,035	,096	,096	,483	,860	,300	,018	,000	,000	,000	
	N	37	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Mark in English	Global mark of the course	Years studying English	Socio-ecomomic level	Self-assessment of their level of English	Interest in English	Perspectives to use English in the future	Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Use of ICTs to learn English	Knowledge of other foreign languages	Participation level	Attention degree in the classroom	Motivation level according to the teacher	Degree of effort in the classroom	General performance in the APLE	Difference in scores in Speaking
Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Pearson Correlation	1	,539**	,710**	,178	,099	,396*	,201	,235	,199	,045	,252	,366*	,494**	,443**	,485**	,567**	-,092
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004	,000	,313	,577	,020	,255	,181	,267	,805	,151	,026	,002	,006	,002	,000	,589
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Mark in English	Pearson Correlation	,539**	1	,853**	,380*	-,097	,903**	,665**	,682**	,430*	,350*	,421*	,157	,337*	,308	,365*	,417*	-,168
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004		,000	,073	,661	,000	,001	,000	,046	,102	,045	,444	,092	,125	,067	,034	,412
	N	26	26	26	23	23	23	23	23	22	23	23	26	26	26	26	26	26
Global mark of the course	Pearson Correlation	,710**	,853**	1	,308	,179	,587**	,408*	,512**	,321	,127	,327	,279	,506**	,448**	,465**	,532**	-,132
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,076	,310	,000	,017	,002	,068	,482	,059	,094	,001	,005	,004	,001	,438
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Years studying English	Pearson Correlation	,178	,380	,308	1	,034	,277	,155	-,079	,287	,124	,074	,007	-,082	,134	-,059	,040	-,348*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,313	,073	,076		,850	,113	,382	,659	,105	,493	,677	,970	,646	,450	,739	,823	,044
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Socio-ecomomic level	Pearson Correlation	,099	-,097	,179	,034	1	,132	,042	,126	,091	,022	,196	,008	,017	-,096	,100	,008	-,164
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,577	,661	,310	,850		,458	,812	,476	,614	,901	,267	,966	,926	,588	,574	,965	,355
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Self-assessment of their level of English	Pearson Correlation	,396*	,903**	,587**	,277	,132	1	,648**	,690**	,526**	,540**	,476**	,074	,069	-,006	,131	,362*	-,020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,020	,000	,000	,113	,458		,000	,000	,002	,001	,004	,676	,699	,971	,460	,035	,910
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Interest in English	Pearson Correlation	,201	,665**	,408*	,155	,042	,648**	1	,828**	,558**	,584**	,478**	,194	,146	,050	,239	,290	,123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,255	,001	,017	,382	,812	,000		,000	,001	,000	,004	,273	,410	,778	,173	,096	,489
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Perspectives to use English in the future	Pearson Correlation	,235	,682**	,512**	-,079	,126	,690**	,828**	1	,509**	,589**	,376*	,234	,214	,014	,279	,290	,267
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,181	,000	,002	,659	,476	,000	,000		,002	,000	,029	,183	,225	,937	,110	,096	,127
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,199	,430*	,321	,287	,091	,526**	,568**	,509**	1	,704**	,404*	,220	,016	,128	,127	,126	-,198
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,267	,046	,068	,105	,614	,002	,001	,002		,000	,020	,218	,931	,478	,480	,483	,269
	N	33	22	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Use of ICTs to learn English	Pearson Correlation	,045	,350	,127	,124	,022	,540**	,584**	,589**	,704**	1	,378*	,043	-,160	-,152	-,071	-,032	,058
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,805	,102	,482	,493	,901	,001	,000	,000	,000		,030	,811	,374	,398	,694	,860	,750
	N	33	23	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Knowledge of other foreign languages	Pearson Correlation	,252	,421*	,327	,074	,196	,476**	,478**	,376*	,404*	,378*	1	,252	,026	,096	,088	,183	-,404*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,151	,045	,059	,677	,267	,004	,004	,029	,020	,030		,151	,885	,588	,623	,300	,018
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Participation level	Pearson Correlation	,366*	,157	,279	,007	,008	,074	,194	,234	,220	,043	,252	1	,333*	,483**	,348*	,388*	-,047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026	,444	,094	,970	,966	,676	,273	,183	,218	,811	,151		,044	,002	,035	,018	,781
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Attention degree in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,494**	,337	,506**	-,082	,017	,069	,146	,214	,016	-,160	,026	,333*	1	,794**	,881**	,782**	,039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,092	,001	,646	,926	,699	,410	,225	,931	,374	,885	,044		,000	,000	,000	,819
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Motivation level according to the teacher	Pearson Correlation	,443**	,308	,448**	,134	-,096	-,006	,050	,014	,128	-,152	,096	,483**	,794**	1	,745**	,674**	-,157
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,006	,125	,005	,450	,588	,971	,778	,937	,478	,398	,588	,002	,000		,000	,000	,352
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Degree of effort in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,485**	,365	,465**	-,059	,100	,131	,239	,279	,127	-,071	,088	,348*	,881**	,745**	1	,743**	,124
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,067	,004	,739	,574	,460	,173	,110	,480	,694	,623	,035	,000	,000		,000	,464
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
General performance in the APLE	Pearson Correlation	,567**	,417*	,532**	,040	,008	,362*	,290	,290	,126	-,032	,183	,388*	,782**	,674**	,743**	1	,016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,034	,001	,823	,965	,035	,096	,096	,483	,860	,300	,018	,000	,000	,000		,924
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Difference in scores in Speaking	Pearson Correlation	-,092	-,168	-,132	-,348*	-,164	-,020	,123	,267	-,198	,058	-,404*	-,047	-,039	-,157	,124	,016	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,589	,412	,438	,044	,355	,910	,489	,127	,269	,750	,018	,781	,819	,352	,464	,924	
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 22. Correlation with Difference in Scores in the Speaking tests

Correlations

		Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Mark in English	Global mark of the course	Years studying English	Socio-ecomomic level	Self-assessment of their level of English	Interest in English	Perspectives to use English in the future	Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Use of ICTs to learn English	Knowledge of other foreign languages	Participation level	Attention degree in the classroom	Motivation level according to the teacher	Degree of effort in the classroom	General performance in the APLE	Difference in scores in Speaking
Mark in Ampliacion de Lengua Extranjera	Pearson Correlation	1	,539**	,710**	,178	,099	,396*	,201	,235	,199	,045	,252	,366*	,494**	,443**	,485**	,567**	-,092
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004	,000	,313	,577	,020	,255	,181	,267	,805	,151	,026	,002	,006	,002	,000	,589
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Mark in English	Pearson Correlation	,539**	1	,863**	,380*	-,097	,903**	,665**	,682**	,430*	,350*	,421*	,157	,337*	,308	,365*	,417*	-,168
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,004		,000	,073	,661	,000	,001	,000	,046	,102	,045	,444	,092	,125	,067	,034	,412
	N	26	26	26	23	23	23	23	23	22	23	23	26	26	26	26	26	26
Global mark of the course	Pearson Correlation	,710**	,853**	1	,308	,179	,587**	,408*	,512**	,321	,127	,327	,279	,506**	,448**	,465**	,532**	-,132
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,076	,310	,000	,017	,002	,068	,482	,059	,094	,001	,005	,004	,001	,438
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Years studying English	Pearson Correlation	,178	,380	,308	1	,034	,277	,155	,079	,287	,124	,074	,007	-,082	,134	-,059	,040	-,348*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,313	,073	,076		,850	,113	,382	,659	,105	,493	,677	,970	,646	,450	,739	,823	,044
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Socio-ecomomic level	Pearson Correlation	,099	-,097	,179	,034	1	,132	,042	,126	,091	,022	,196	,008	,017	-,096	,100	,008	-,164
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,577	,661	,310	,850		,458	,812	,476	,614	,901	,267	,966	,926	,588	,574	,965	,355
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Self-assessment of their level of English	Pearson Correlation	,396*	,903**	,587**	,277	,132	1	,648**	,690**	,526**	,540**	,476**	,074	,069	-,006	,131	,362*	-,020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,020	,000	,000	,113	,458		,000	,000	,002	,001	,004	,676	,699	,971	,460	,035	,910
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Interest in English	Pearson Correlation	,201	,665**	,408*	,155	,042	,648**	1	,828**	,558**	,584**	,478**	,194	,146	,050	,239	,290	,123
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,255	,001	,017	,382	,812	,000		,000	,001	,000	,004	,273	,410	,778	,173	,096	,489
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Perspectives to use English in the future	Pearson Correlation	,235	,682**	,512**	-,079	,126	,690**	,828**	1	,509**	,589**	,376*	,234	,214	,014	,279	,290	,267
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,181	,000	,002	,659	,476	,000	,000		,002	,000	,029	,183	,225	,937	,110	,096	,127
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Possibilities to use English outside the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,199	,430*	,321	,287	,091	,526**	,558**	,509**	1	,704**	,404*	,220	,016	,128	,127	,126*	-,198
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,267	,046	,068	,105	,614	,002	,001	,002		,000	,020	,218	,931	,478	,480	,483	,269
	N	33	22	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Use of ICTs to learn English	Pearson Correlation	,045	,350	,127	,124	,022	,540**	,584**	,589**	,704**	1	,378*	,043	,026	-,152	-,071	-,032	,058
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,805	,102	,482	,493	,901	,001	,000	,000	,000		,030	,811	,885	,394	,694	,860	,750
	N	33	23	33	33	33	33	33	33	32	33	33	33	33	33	33	33	33
Knowledge of other foreign languages	Pearson Correlation	,252	,421*	,327	,074	,196	,476**	,478**	,376*	,404*	,378*	1	,252	,026	,096	,088	,183	-,404*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,151	,045	,059	,677	,267	,004	,004	,029	,020	,030		,151	,885	,588	,623	,300	,018
	N	34	23	34	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Participation level	Pearson Correlation	,366*	,157	,279	,007	,008	,074	,194	,234	,220	,043	,252	1	,333*	,483**	,348*	,388*	-,047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,026	,444	,094	,970	,966	,676	,273	,183	,218	,811	,151		,044	,002	,035	,018	,781
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Attention degree in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,494**	,337	,506**	-,082	,017	,069	,146	,214	,016	-,160	,026	,333*	1	,794**	,881**	,782**	,039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,092	,001	,646	,926	,699	,410	,225	,931	,374	,885	,044		,000	,000	,000	,819
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Motivation level according to the teacher	Pearson Correlation	,443**	,308	,448**	,134	-,096	-,006	,050	,014	,128	-,152	,096	,483**	,794**	1	,745**	,674**	-,157
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,006	,125	,005	,450	,588	,971	,778	,937	,478	,398	,588	,002	,000		,000	,000	,352
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Degree of effort in the classroom	Pearson Correlation	,485**	,365	,465**	-,059	,100	,131	,239	,279	,127	-,071	,088	,348*	,881**	,745**	1	,743**	,124
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	,067	,004	,739	,574	,460	,173	,110	,480	,694	,623	,035	,000	,000		,000	,464
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
General performance in the APLE	Pearson Correlation	,567**	,417*	,532**	,040	,008	,362*	,290	,290	,126	-,032	,183	,388*	,782**	,674**	,743**	1	,016
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,034	,001	,823	,965	,035	,096	,096	,483	,860	,300	,018	,000	,000	,000		,924
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37
Difference in scores in Speaking	Pearson Correlation	-,092	-,168	-,132	-,348*	-,164	-,020	-,123	,267	-,198	,058	-,404*	-,047	,039	-,157	,124	,016	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,589	,412	,438	,044	,355	,910	,489	,127	,269	,750	,018	,781	,819	,352	,464	,924	
	N	37	26	37	34	34	34	34	34	33	33	34	37	37	37	37	37	37

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 23. Correlation with Difference in Scores in the Pronunciation tests

Once we understood a little bit better what could have influenced participants' results in the pre-test, our aim was to explore whether any of this background information we had considered could explain students' improvement (or lack of improvement) between the pre and the post-test –apart from the treatment itself, which, as we hypothesized, was the main responsible of such improvement. In this case, correlations in general did not prove to be significantly high using a 0.01 significance level, with only one negative correlation between difference in scores in the listening test and participants self-assessment of their level of English (.-5.55), which meant that the more participants improved, the lower they considered their level of English. If we took into account correlations that were significant with a 0.05 level, then we could also find negative correlations between difference in scores in the listening test and participants' mark in English (coefficient of -.49), their interest in English (coefficient of -.40), and their performance in the *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* course according to the teacher (coefficient of -.37). Negative correlations could also be found regarding the difference in scores in the speaking test and the years participants spent learning English (coefficient of -.35), as well as with the knowledge of other foreign languages (coefficient of -.41). No significant correlations were found as far as the difference in scores in the pronunciation test was concerned.

Regarding results on our motivation questionnaires, we put a lot of hope on the potential of our treatment to comply with these strategies. This was so because, as it could be inferred from the pilot study of this questionnaire, participants believed that the implementation of such strategies in their *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes was not matching their interests (α< 0,05: H1 was valid, which meant that there was a significant difference between what students found interesting and what they were actually doing in their *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes).

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Mean_interest	3,84	40	,44	,07
	Mean_frequency	3,39	40	,60	,10

Table 24. Motivation questionnaire – Descriptive data comparing what participants find interesting and what they actually do in their classes

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Mean_interest - Mean_frequency	,45[illegible]	,62[illegible]	,09[illegible]	,25[illegible]	,64	4,591	39	,000

Table 25. Motivation questionnaire – T-test comparing what participants find interesting and what they actually do in their classes

Nevertheless, when results concerning the compliance of our treatment with these strategies were compared with participants' interests, results did not prove as positive as we expected – since α < 0,05, so H1 was valid, which meant that there was a significant difference between what students found interesting and what they achieved during the treatment.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Mean_interest	3,82	38	,44	,07
	Mean_treatment	3,27	38	,51	,08

Table 26. Motivation questionnaire – Descriptive data comparing what participants find interesting and what they accomplished in the treatment.

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Mean_interest - Mean_treatment	,54	,65	,10	,32	,75	5,1	37	,0

Table 27. Motivation questionnaire – T-test comparing what participants find interesting and what they accomplished in the treatment.

In order to explore what the problem was, we firstly decided to have a look at the descriptive data on the three main areas of the pre and post-questionnaire: students' degree of interest in Dörnyei's (1994a) motivation strategies, degree of compliance of their *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes with such strategies, and degree of compliance of our treatment with them as well.

Statistics on the three main areas of the motivation questionnaire

	Mean_interest	Mean_freq	Mean_treat
Mean	3,84	3,39	3,27
Median	3,91	3,42	3,24
Mode	1,93[a]	1,45[a]	3,06[a]
Std. Deviation	,44	,60	,51
Minimum	1,93	1,45	2,20
Maximum	4,56	4,29	4,26

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 28. Motivation questionnaire – Descriptive data on the three main areas of the motivation questionnaire.

If we had a look at the broad picture, results seemed not be as revealing as we expected. Having a look at students' opinions on whether the strategies proposed were interesting for them, we could come to the conclusion that they generally agreed to that respect (3.84/5)– something which was obviously positive, as we tried to base the design of our tasks in these strategies. Nevertheless, when students were asked about the degree of compliance with such strategies in their everyday classes and during the treatment, results seemed to be slightly better in the first case –although it must be pointed out that in both cases students generally agreed on the aforementioned compliance with motivation strategies (3.39/5 regarding their *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes and 3.27/5 regarding the treatment) and that this difference in scores was not significant

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Mean_frequency - Mean_treatment	,09909	,69568	,11285	-,12958	,32776	,878	37	,386

Table 29. Motivation questionnaire – T-test comparing what participants find do in their classes and what they accomplished in the treatment.

There was something, however, that made us realize that further analysis was needed –the fact that the most popular answer regarding the treatment was way higher than that concerning *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes (from a 3.06/5 to a 1.45/5). Furthermore, if we had a look at the minimum and maximum results in both categories, minimum results were also higher for the treatment (2.2/5 opposed to 1.45/5 concerning students' conventional classes) whereas maximum results were pretty close to one another (4.26/5 and 4.29/5 respectively).

Taking this into consideration, we decided to observe the degree of compliance of both the treatment and the *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes with each particular strategy, as it was only this way we could have a closer look at results.

	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #1	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #2	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #3	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #4	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #5	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #6	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #7	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #8	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #9	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #10	Results Motivation Pre-Quest Frequency Strategy #11
Mean	3,6663	3,2500	3,9875	3,2497	3,3675	3,4427	3,4500	3,5248	3,3875	3,1163	2,8188
Median	3,6700	3,5000	4,0000	3,0000	3,3300	3,4750	3,5000	3,6700	3,5000	3,1650	3,0000
Mode	4,00	3,50	5,00	3,00	3,67	3,00[a]	3,50	4,00	3,50	3,33	2,50
Std. Deviation	,72447	,83972	,90219	,76514	,72336	,84970	,96609	,83987	,84343	,70266	,83203
Minimum	1,33	1,00	1,50	2,00	1,67	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,33	1,50
Maximum	5,00	5,00	5,00	5,00	4,67	4,72	5,00	4,67	5,00	4,67	5,00

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 30. Motivation questionnaire – Descriptive data per strategy I

	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #1	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #2	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #3	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #4	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #5	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #6	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #7	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #8	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #9	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #10	Results Motivation Post-Quest Strategy #11
Mean	2,9337	3,1842	2,4803	3,4563	3,3997	3,5642	3,6579	3,3516	3,3947	3,3208	3,2632
Median	3,0000	3,5000	2,5000	3,3300	3,5850	3,5850	3,5000	3,5000	3,5000	3,5000	3,5000
Mode	2,33[a]	3,00	1,00[a]	3,33	3,67	3,33[a]	3,00	3,67	3,50	3,67	3,00
Std. Deviation	,86500	,90360	1,13956	,74105	,58997	,51831	,88612	,72685	,86335	,62069	,76879
Minimum	1,33	1,00	1,00	1,33	2,33	2,06	1,50	2,00	1,00	2,00	1,00
Maximum	4,67	5,00	5,00	4,67	4,67	4,50	5,00	4,67	5,00	4,33	4,50

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Table 31. Motivation questionnaire – Descriptive data per strategy II

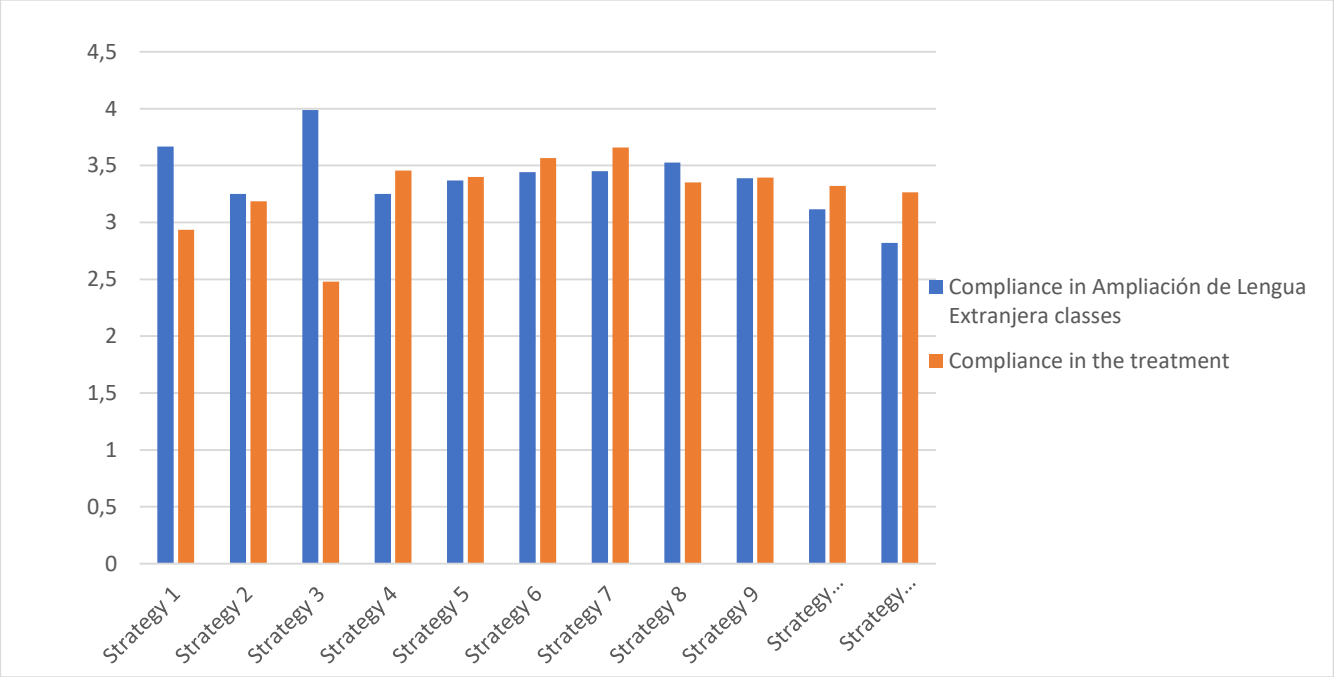

Figure 19. Graph comparing mean scores of what participants do in their classes and what they accomplished during the treatment.

If we had a look at the mean scores in both categories, *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* and the treatment, we could realize that in seven strategies out of eleven –more than half of them– students found that our treatment was slightly more effective in promoting their motivation than what they were already doing in their everyday classes. This together with the fact that our treatment scored higher than three in nine out of eleven strategies showed that our treatment had a lot of potential: if a proposal of only four-five sessions was able to score high in most strategies and it was even able to overcome the results of a one-year complete course in seven out of eleven situations, what would happen if we generalized or even extended the use of this type of materials and tasks?

Nevertheless, the fact that our treatment did not manage to score high or to at least do better than students' conventional classes in several strategies was something that worried us and, for that reason, we wanted to hypothesize what could have gone wrong in those cases.

Most of the strategies where results were not as good as expected were those concerning the language level, more specifically, strategy number one, number two and number three. Could this mean that out treatment did not manage to promote motivation in this level?

If we have a look at strategy number one, however, we can be actually quite surprised with the low score (2.93/5) that our treatment obtained in this area. The strategy proposed the introduction of a sociocultural component in the syllabus and we believed to have accomplished this to a great extent (as we had based our lessons in sociocultural components such as authentic videos and podcasts). What made then students rate this strategy so low? We decided to go back to the items that actually represented this strategy in the motivation questionnaire and we observed that we had verbalized them like this:

- Item 5 – During the treatment, we were in touch with the L2 culture and the L2 community in some way.
- Item 19 – During the treatment, we dealt with various authentic cultural products as supplementary materials (i.e. films, TV recordings, magazines, newspapers, songs…).
- Item 23 – During the treatment, we had some English-speaking foreigners as guest speakers to the class.

Having a look at these items, we could therefore understand why our treatment scored quite low in this category, as we did not promote students' contact with the L2 community and this component may have stood out against the other sociocultural components. We could conclude then that this misrepresentation of facts may have been caused by a poor selection of items to represent this strategy, as even if involving native speakers in lessons is a great representative of sociocultural components, it is definitely not the only one or the most important one.

Moving on to strategy number two, which entailed the development of learners' cross-cultural awareness system, we were also surprised that our treatment had not scored as high as students' conventional classes, given that our tasks revolved around cultural products and cultural aspects. Once more, we decided to go back to the items that represented this strategy in order to analyse their wording:

- Item 20 – During the treatment, we familiarized with the cultural background of the English language in order to understand it better.
- Item 27 – During the treatment, we learnt more about the L2 culture and saw which things we have in common and which not.

These items, in this case, seemed to represent the strategy itself quite well, so the low scoring could not be explained by a poor wording of items here. As a result, two only options remained possible: 1) the fact that our treatment, in fact, did not promote learners' cross-cultural awareness system as well as their conventional classes; or 2) that our treatment promoted it in a way that students were not used to –and, thus, they did not identify as cross-cultural training. We must remember that scholars have long discussed the meaning of culture, with authors such as Thanasoulas (2001) distinguishing between the concept of "Culture with Capital C" or "C" culture –art, music, literature, politics and other intellectual products of the elite, which traditionally monopolized the meaning of culture in a wrong way, as they only represent the tip of the iceberg– and "culture with a small c" or "c" culture –which includes people's behavioural patterns and lifestyles within culture, the biggest part of the iceberg which, in turn, it is difficult to see and obviously to teach. Traditionally, teaching culture has been more about teaching "C" culture and students may have thus associated it with getting to know more about music, literature or cinema –something which we also introduced in our treatment, but maybe not in both teaching units. However, it may have appeared that, when we were introducing "c" culture –i.e. presenting the way people behave in certain situations or how genres may have different structures in different countries and languages– we were not actually teaching any culture at all. This could then explain why our treatment scored not as high as we expected regarding the development of learners' cross-cultural awareness.

In the case of strategy number three, the reason why it did not score high was easy to see straight away. This strategy was about promoting student contact with L2 speakers and we did not do it much as we previously anticipated (this could only be achieved in the blogs and podcasts teaching unit and mainly in an incidental way). Nevertheless, and even if we did not do much to promote this strategy in the proposed treatment, it must be pointed out that we consider this strategy of an utmost importance and that we believe that it should be further addressed in future research.

Finally, the last strategy that did not score as high as we expected was part of the Learning Situation Level – Course-specific motivational components. Strategy number eight, the only strategy belonging to the Learning Situation Level which underscored in this questionnaire,

entailed the following: increasing students' interest and involvement in the task by designing and selecting varied and challenging activities, adapting tasks to students' interests, including new elements every time, proposing game-like tasks, leaving activities open-ended, personalising tasks so that students engage in meaningful interactions and so on. Given the length and scope of this strategy, we decided once more to analyse the items that represented this strategy, which were the following:

- Item 10 – During the treatment, we dealt with activities that encouraged us to share personal experiences and thoughts.
- Item 12 – During the treatment, we dealt with challenging tasks such as activities that require us to solve problems or discover something.
- Item 22 – During the treatment, we had fun while learning the language (i.e. using game-like activities).

Having a look at these items, we hypothesized that the problem may have originated for different reasons: 1) items did not manage to represent some of the ideas introduced in this strategy, such as the one referring to presenting new elements –a key characteristic of our proposal; 2) students may have considered that they were not actually sharing personal experiences, solving problems or using game-like activities –maybe because this three areas were indirectly targeted.

3.3.4.4 Assessment

This example of implementation is an attempt to test the potential of our innovation project which, in turn, is only an example of how innovation can be introduced in the system through a change of materials and activities. As a result, with this assessment we do not intend to make categorical statements about the benefits or the disadvantages of this proposal –we only want to draw conclusions from how the implementation experience went in order to figure out the potential of a proposal like this one. Results from this example of implementation, moreover, can also serve as some type of support to the theoretical framework that we carefully designed for the reliability of our proposal: now we cannot only maintain that our proposal is solid because it is based on reliable theoretical grounds, but also because results of a preliminary pilot study draw optimistic results.

Given that we targeted an average public school in Spain, the sample of our study represented the average student coming from a middle-class family and attending a standard public school in the suburbs of a big city –a school where innovation had not reached the

language classroom yet, at least in a notorious way. In order to ensure that we complied with these criteria, participants were selected from two different schools which supposedly portrayed these features.

Participants of the study where all taking the *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* subject, an optional course for *Bachillerato* students which mainly aimed at improving students' oral skills, one of the main objectives of our proposal. Participants seemed to do quite well in this subject in general (an average grade of 7.67 in School 1 and an average grade of 7.37 in School 2), although they actually showed mixed abilities regarding their language skills –i.e. results of the pre-test showed very different results among participants and very different results comparing School 1 and School 2. Nevertheless, they had all studied the language for more or less the same time (10 to 11 years in most cases) and they all shared a more or less similar learning context –i.e. most of them stated that they had access to studying the language beyond the classroom, that they frequently used ICTs for this purpose and that they benefited from knowing another foreign language. Moreover, teachers of the course valued their work and effort quite highly in most cases.

However, we must not forget that the Spanish context has been proved to be of a low profile regarding language learning when compared to other European neighbouring countries (Morales Gálvez et al., 2000; Comajoan, 2010). As we could see in section 2.1, there seemed to be a general belief that the approach to language learning in Spain was somewhat misconceived, as it was particularly striking that in similar contexts results were so different, especially when it came to students' oral skills. The pilot study of our research instruments also pointed out towards that direction, as in this case we could observe that students were all around a B1 level concerning their oral skills after 10 or more years of tuition and that there was a significant difference between what participants found interesting and what they were actually doing in their language classes. For that reason, we came to the conclusion that there was a need for improvement in the way oral skills are taught and in the way students are motivated to engage in their own learning.

Results from our actual sample in the pre-study phase proved to be in the same line: there was room for improvement regarding participants' scores in the oral tests –especially if we took into account that they were being tested based on a not very high level– and regarding the strategies used to motivate them in their learning process –students found strategies selected quite interesting (3.84/5) but, once more, they believed that the implementation of these strategies in their *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes was not matching their interests

enough, as there was a significant difference between what they found interesting and what they were actually accomplishing.

For that reason, our proposal was presented as a way to potentially tackle this situation. Our main target was thus to introduce innovation through a change in the materials and the activities used in the language classroom and, for that purpose, we presented our sample with two teaching units based on the use of ICTs and authentic materials which was supposed to improve participants' oral skills and to motivate them to be more engaged in their own learning. The activities presented were largely credited to fulfil such purposes, since:

- They made use of materials which had been repeatedly tested to be effective in the language classroom –namely videos and blogs & podcasts (see for example Burt [1999], Jobbings [2005], Sueyoshi and Hardison [2005], Sze, [2006], Constantine, [2007], Rosell-Aguilar [2007], Fox [2008], Shrosbee [2008], Suvorov [2009], Cross [2011]).
- They complied with an appropriate method and appropriate criteria to design effective activities for the development of oral skills (Nunan, 1989; Hall, 2011).
- They complied with a selection of Dörnyei's (1994a) strategies to promote motivation in the language classroom.
- They drew on topics that, according to our participants, were interesting for them, connecting what they were learning with their everyday lives and motivating them even more.

After implementing the treatment in both schools for a week, we realized that, even if participants were exposed to it for a short period of time, improvements in both areas –oral skills and motivation levels– could be discerned.

Regarding the improvement of oral skills, we could observe that participants in this study had improved, at least slightly, in all three areas here concerned –listening, speaking and pronunciation. When we compared the results in the pre and in the post-test, we were able to see that participants had improved on average 2.9% in their listening test, 1.19% in their speaking test and 3.5% in their pronunciation test –in this last case, the improvement was actually significant. This may not seem a great improvement if we only look at the raw numbers, but we need to consider that participants were only exposed to the treatment for a week, so the fact that there were visible improvements in all areas –even a significant one regarding their pronunciation– was a great accomplishment. We have already stated that it is very difficult to hypothesize how improvement could develop across time, as the improvement curve is not

linear, but it rather replies to a power-of-law function. Nevertheless, we can assert that these activities seem to have the potential to trigger great improvement through time. This was something also supported by participants, who valued our activities quite highly when it came to their potential to improve oral skills. This was especially true when activities were considered as a full treatment and not individually, as they were believed to have different strengths and weaknesses and they could only represent a comprehensive solution when administered together. Nevertheless, further research would be needed in order to actually prove whether this potential can actually turn into a reality.

It is also important to point out that the study of correlations allowed for asserting that improvement among participants had been mainly caused by our treatment and not by other factors that normally interfere in students' performance –i.e. the fact that they were good students, the fact that they had chances to study the language outside the classroom or the fact that they were very interested in learning the language, whether for pleasure or in preparation for the future. However, we must not forget that some marginal correlations were found between students of a lower profile –i.e. students with low grades, students who do not think highly of their level of English or students who have learnt the language for shorter– and their improvement. This, in turn, could be interpreted as an interesting contribution of our proposal, as we could say that our proposal is in a way particularly beneficial for this type of students.

Regarding the degree to which our treatment was able to motivate students, optimistic results could not be seen as straight forward as in the previous case. The first thing that we discovered when results were analysed was that there was a significant difference between what students found interesting and what they had actually achieved during the treatment. This together with the fact that average scores regarding what students had accomplished in their *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes were higher than those regarding what they had accomplished during the treatment painted a bleak picture. What could have gone wrong? Therefore, we decided to see the compliance of our treatment with the selection of motivation strategies one by one. After doing so, we came to the following conclusions:

1. In most cases, our treatment was considered to comply with the selection of strategies proposed.
2. Our treatment complied with these strategies to a higher degree than the *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera* classes in most cases: it scored higher in seven out of eleven strategies. This was particularly revealing taking into account that our treatment had only run for one week and *Ampliación de Lengua Extranjera*, by that time, had already run for at least two three-month terms.

3. Strategies in which our treatment scored the lowest could have been affected by study design issues –i.e. participants not really understanding concepts, such as the teaching of culture, or items of the questionnaire not really portraying a given strategy appropriately.

As a conclusion, we could say that this treatment, although short, showed that this type of materials and activities have the potential to make students improve quite a lot regarding their oral skills and their motivation levels. This is in line with all the theoretical framework that supported our innovation project, so it allows us to state that our proposal is not only valid because it carefully follows sound theoretical principles, but also because, as seen in this pilot study, it initially shows positive changes in the language classroom.

4 IMPLICATIONS OF THIS PROPOSAL

Now that we have presented our innovation project in detail, it is time to reflect on it, find out its possible limitations, open new research lines for the future and think of the possible implications of a proposal like this one. As we previously said, the most interesting aspect of an innovation experience is its potential future consequences: the impact it can have on teachers, students or the educational community altogether. For that reason, this chapter is crucial in order to interpret the relevance of our project, in order to fully understand the contribution we would like to make with this dissertation.

The first sub-section in this chapter will thus present the limitations observed on this project so that they cannot only be acknowledged, but ideally tackled in future research –a way, thus, to provide a more reliable and extensive answer to the problems behind this proposal. The second sub-section, on the other hand, aims at guiding us towards the ultimate goal of any educational project: the ability to inject an eagerness for autonomous learning into students, something which could ultimately lead towards lifelong learning. Finally, this will all guide us towards the conclusions of this dissertation.

4.1 Limitations of this project & future research

Even if the potential of our proposal has been secured by a careful adherence to solid theoretical principles and by the optimistic results of the example of implementation that we carried out, the truth is that this project also has its limitations as any project does. These shortcomings originate from the design of the project itself or from the design of the pilot study, so being aware of them is something crucial if we want to faithfully interpret data and, especially, if we want to be prepared to give even more improved solutions in the future.

The first limitation of our innovation project is its restricted scope. As we previously anticipated, our proposal, which more than an innovation project should be called an innovation experience (De la Torre, 1997), aimed at a change in materials and tasks used in the EFL classroom for the development of oral skills, and not at a change in teachers' roles & behaviours or at the ultimate change of the education culture. In other words, it was not a fundamental innovation aiming at restructuring the system (Rivas Navarro, 2000).

Our project, as we have already mentioned when talking about its rationale and appropriateness, was in turn a small-scale contribution which proposed simple changes –simple changes which however showed great potential. First of all, we must not forget Carbonell's (2001) words, which stated that small changes can easily permeate the system and eventually go upwards in it –a change that is successfully implemented in the classroom may then be

implemented in a whole school department, a whole school or even in a whole educational community. Introducing small but successful changes in the classroom is actually the best way to attain an interiorization of changes, as teachers may feel more encouraged to apply changes that were successfully introduced by their colleagues in similar circumstances rather than those proposed by educational authorities, which tend to stand far from the classroom reality. On top of this, we must not forget that even if our project directly targeted tasks and materials, it was also able to indirectly target more crucial elements of the system: namely educational objectives and agents' roles. We just have to think of how the method guiding the implementation of materials and the design of tasks, through placing communication in a central position, had the potential to make EFL classes less about the overexploited explicit focus-on-form approach, less about transferring all control to the teacher. Classes, in fact, became a place where students were more in control, where the teacher moved from a managing position to a facilitating one, where lessons were more about learning constructively in groups than about learning by heart everything that the teacher said.

Finally, we should also consider that, as we have already said, this innovation experience could be the initial phase to a larger and more comprehensive innovation project. As a result, this opens up a new line for future research where, building up on this idea, we could design a complete innovation project. Such an innovation project, which would be once more inspired on a change of materials but also on a change of pedagogical methods, would thus imply an actual change of roles, objectives and learning strategies in the educational community, an actual implication of all agents involved and an actual re-thinking of education according to our changing realities. A project like this one would be needed given the limitations of the Spanish educational system, so it could be a serious line for future research to consider.

Another shortcoming of this project –and, subsequently, of its example of implementation– would be its length. The two teaching units at the centre of our proposal, which intend to exemplify how materials proposed can actually be integrated in the EFL classroom in order to effectively improve students' oral skills, count on only four to five one-hour sessions each, which is not very much. Some questions which may arise could be: how could this proposal be considered a real alternative to textbooks when it cannot even cover more than two or three academic weeks? Or how can we discern its effectivity in such a short period of time?

The length of this proposal, however, has a raison d'être. First of all, it would have required a very long time to carefully select, design and test activities complying with our guiding criteria so that they covered a whole academic year and, therefore, a dissertation was not the place for a project like that. On the other hand, as we have previously mentioned, the idea behind this

project was to provide teachers with tools to improve the teaching of oral skills, presenting them with a series of resources based on the use of ICTs and authentic materials and presenting them with a series of guiding principles for its effective use –i.e. principles to enforce innovation and motivation, an effective method or several pieces of advice for the correct teaching of oral skills. For that reason, we must consider our actual proposal as the tip of the iceberg –an example from which teachers can get inspired. The ultimate goal of this innovation project is that other EFL teachers who get access to it eventually feel encouraged to carry out a similar project, using even a wider selection of resources and adapting it to their classroom reality and to their time availability.

Regarding the example of implementation, the fact that the treatment was also very short –only one week, as we only tested one teaching unit per school– was also justified. A first obvious reason is the length of the proposal itself, since even if we had wanted to implement a longer treatment, it would have not extended for longer than two weeks –the equivalent to implementing both teaching units. However, the most important reason behind the short length of the treatment had to do with the access to schools. Participating schools agreed to get involved in this project provided that it did not interfere too much with the development of the course, as they had a syllabus to cover. Our project, as we could see in the implementation planning, extended for three to four weeks, something which is quite long considering that an academic term consists of 12 weeks on average. For that reason, a longer treatment would not have been feasible given our context. Nevertheless, it opens up a line for future research once more: one where the actual EFL teachers, in close collaboration with university researchers, used and tested this type of tasks and materials for longer periods within their own lessons, with not so many time constraints. Maybe if EFL teachers engaged in this type of research, we could obtain more reliable results in the format of longitudinal studies.

There were more limitations of this project closely related to the design of its example of implementation. One, for example, could be the relatively small amount of participants in this study (38 *bachillerato* students), especially taking into account that we were going to collect quantitative data. Nevertheless, we decided to stick to a small group of participants in order to thoroughly analyse them. This being said, increasing the sample in future research could be very interesting, as results could be more easily generalized to the whole population –especially if this entailed a wider diversity of backgrounds, where not only average schools were represented.

Something that could have been improved regarding the design of the pilot study would be the exclusive use of quantitative data. A study like this one would have benefited from a mixed

research design, where quantitative data was complemented with qualitative one. We understand now that this could have explained certain issues that we have not been able to solve in this study –i.e. why did some students underperform in the post-test? Did that mean that they were worsening their oral skills with our treatment? Or could it be that the type of test we were providing them with was not allowing us to see improvements? For that reason, we believe that in the future, if this study was replicated or extended, it should also include certain qualitative analysis –i.e. researcher notes on participants' behaviour while completing tasks and videos/recordings of their performance for the observation of improvement patterns.

Regarding the study of motivation in this pilot study, another shortcoming that we can observe now is the fact that motivation questionnaires were anonymous. We already explained that we made them anonymous in order that participants could express themselves freely and results were not contrived by the embarrassment factor. Nevertheless, if the questionnaire had not been anonymous, we could have linked these results with participants' performance scores –we would have lost a little bit of the "complete honesty" factor but, in turn, we may have obtained revealing connections between how students performed and how their motivation levels increased. For that reason, it would be interesting to consider making motivation questionnaires which were not anonymous in case we decided to replicate/extend this study in the future, as results could be revealing.

Another problem which aroused from the analysis of motivation questionnaires is the fact that, according to results, not all motivation strategies were addressed. For instance, we already agreed that our proposal did not manage to put participants in touch with native speakers, a strategy considered key for the development of motivation among students. Therefore, future research in line with this project should try to adjust even more to these theoretical principles, managing to fulfil all of the strategies here selected. What is more, if our aim was to go towards a more comprehensive innovation project, all strategies proposed by Dörnyei (1994a) should be fulfilled, even those concerning the learner level or the teacher-specific and group-specific components of the learning situation level.

Something this innovation project could be easily criticized for is also the fact that, although all our materials and tasks are supposed to promote on the three oral skills here analysed in one way or another, we cannot have the reassurance that all particular tasks and materials are beneficial to this purpose. Since students in different schools carried out different tasks and since they were tested only after completing a whole teaching unit, it would be very difficult to know which tasks or which materials were more or less beneficial for their improvement in these areas. Nevertheless, the first part of the motivation post-questionnaire where students could

actually rate the potential of each of the activities they completed was quite helpful in this respect. It is true that it did not give us objective data, but it allowed us to grasp the potential of each of the tasks here proposed, which was pretty much similar across materials and tasks. Moreover, designing a study where the actual efficiency of these tasks and materials was assessed separately would depart from the idea behind this study, which is to evaluate the effect of the many potential uses of ICTs and authentic materials. We should also consider that it is very difficult to spot "the best resource" or to come up with "the perfect task", a resource or a task which is able to promote the three skills here analysed in equal terms while promoting all the motivation strategies that guided our study. For that reason, and even if it is possible to design a similar study in order that the efficiency of tasks and materials are analysed separately, we believe that we have provided the best solution we could find to this conundrum: measuring the effect of these types of resources and tasks by offering a wide selection of them, a selection that, only when considered as a whole treatment, can provide us with the results we were looking for.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that we are not critical with the tasks proposed or even with the measurement instruments we used to test their efficiency. Regarding tasks making up this innovation experience, we cannot help asking ourselves the following: what was wrong with activities that scored the lowest according to participants' opinion? Could we modify them in any way so that they could potentially foster the improvement of oral skills or participants' motivation even more? This is something that should be obviously addressed in future research, as improving our proposal is only part of the implementation-reflection-and-action process of any innovation or research project. Finally, regarding measurement instruments used in this study, two ideas need to be reconsidered: 1) is the PET test –the one used to measure listening and speaking skills– the most appropriate instrument to track improvement in a proposal like ours?; and 2) were items selected for the motivation questionnaires the best representatives of Dörnyei's (1994a) strategies? Concerning question number one, we had already pointed out that we had selected the PET test because, even if it did not comply with the principles that guided the design of this innovative proposal, the truth is that it was a well-recognized test that many students could end up taking if they wanted to prove their English level –and, thus, making improvements in this test was considered very important. However, the question that remains is: is there any other official test with a similar relevance that could measure communicative improvements better? Or in case there was not, could we design a reliable test that complied with these requirements? Future research in line with this proposal should try to address this issue, although the search for and design of a suitable option could actually be considered a whole study on its own. Regarding question number two, we could see from some of the unexpected answers to the motivation questionnaire that certain items may have not

been well selected in order to comply with Dörnyei's (1994a) motivation strategies. For that reason, in the future we should try to rethink the selection of items here proposed or, at least, to rethink their wording, as results in this study have made us hypothesize that they could actually be misleading.

4.2 The need to guide students towards autonomous learning

In our previous chapter, we not only proposed a project which could exemplify how to effectively teach oral skills in a motivating way through the use of authentic materials and ICTs, but we also tested its potential with optimistic results. Given the situation, we could already state that this dissertation has already made a contribution to the field of language learning. Nevertheless, and as we had previously anticipated, we wanted to present our innovation project as part of a broader picture, thinking about its possible future implications. The previous section has already shown how this project could be subject to expand and become a more comprehensive innovation project, where more key educational areas could be modified. Now, it is time to analyse the project's potential to foster a lifelong language learning model, as it not only provides students with tools to keep on learning outside the classroom, but it also motivates them to do so.

4.2.1 Autonomous learning and its potential effects. Towards a lifelong language learning model.

Lifelong learning can be defined as the ongoing, voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons (Department of Education and Science, 2000) –that is, a constant learning process which one voluntarily takes and which can take different forms (i.e. from formal learning to all types of informal autonomous learning). In the field of language learning, aiming at a lifelong learning model is of an utmost importance, as languages are constantly evolving and we, language learners, need to be constantly in touch with them in order to aim at high levels of proficiency. We must remember that second language acquisition does not only depend on one's personal and situational factors, but also on the availability of input and on the possibilities to produce output to test language hypotheses. For that reason, confining the study of foreign languages to school years is obviously not an option if we want to educate functional foreign language users. The question now is, how can we make sure that language learners embrace a lifelong language learning model?

Even if the availability of language programs in formal and informal settings for students of all ages is a widespread reality in our country nowadays, we should also consider that not everyone has the time, the money or the eagerness to enrol in this type of courses. In order to tackle this situation, we believe that the best solution is to encourage students to self-direct their own learning drawing from the myriad of materials and resources available now for the independent study of the foreign language. Autonomous learning, in fact, cannot only benefit those who decide not to take formal classes –it can also offer a tailor-made answer for everyone, as it allows learners to study at their own pace and to use materials that match better their learning styles among other things.

However, before we go any deeper into the potential benefits of autonomous learning, we should first understand the concept and its history better. Many authors agree that, even if autonomous learning has always existed –as there have always been people who learnt languages on their own throughout history (Ryan, 1997)–, the field as we know was born with Henri Holec's work for the Council of Europe in the 1970s (Godwin-Jones, 2001; Benson, 2006). This author initially defined autonomy as the ability to take charge of all concerning aspects of one's own learning –i.e. determining objectives, defining contents, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring acquisition and so on (Holec, 1981 –cited in Nunan, 1997). Nevertheless, since then there have been some other scholars who have extended or even outlined the concept. Some authors, like Dickinson (1987 –cited in Benson, 2006) treated autonomy not only as an attribute to the learner, but also as a term to describe learning situations "in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions" (p.22). Later, Dickinson (1995) also talked about autonomy as the capacity for active, independent learning as well as critical reflection and decision making and as an attitude to take responsibility for that learning. Some other authors, on the other hand, decided to distinguish autonomy from other similar terms. Pinkman (2005), for example, tried to distinguish learner autonomy from learner independence, using Holec's (1981 –cited in Nunan, 1997) definition for the first one and characterizing the second by incorporating the idea of strategy development in such definition. Nunan (1997) cited Dickinson (1987) once more to draw the distinction between self-instruction –neutral term for situations in which learners are working without the direct control of the teacher, but not necessarily taking control–, self-direction –the attitude to accept the responsibility for one's own learning, but not for the implementation of such decisions– and autonomy –situation in which the learner is not only responsible for all the decisions concerned with learning, but also for the implementation of such decisions. Finally, we found particularly interesting the idea proposed by Mariana (1997), who does not see autonomy as a monolithic concept, but rather as one end of a continuum where dependence takes the opposite side. In this autonomy-dependence model, the key is to

find the right balance, a place where we manage both autonomy and dependence according to our own specific needs at each time.

> At one end, we have a need for autonomy, a need to become independent and responsible human beings, to increase our powers of self-regulation –but at the other end we also have a need for dependence, for the feeling that we belong somewhere, for the feeling that we can rely on people and things to get through the demands of life –a need to feel secure in a safe, non-threatening environment.
> (Mariani, 1997:1).

Now that we better understand the concept of autonomous learning, the question that remains is the following: if it has always existed, why has it become more relevant in the past years? As we mentioned before, most scholars agree that the history of autonomous learning as a field of study begins with the publication of Holec's (1981) seminal report for the Council of Europe's Modern Language Project (Godwin-Jones, 2001; Benson, 2006). Nevertheless, its popularization is believed to be associated to other factors, such as the growth of computer-aided language learning or CALL (Godwin-Jones, 2001) and, in general, the growth of ICTs, which provides easy access to potential language learning materials (Ryan, 1997).

Nowadays, we can distinguish between two different types of autonomous learning: autonomy in the language classroom and autonomy beyond the language classroom. Autonomy in the language classroom involves the pedagogical talk between teachers and learners so that the latter can take more control over their own learning, even if they can always rely on teachers for assistance in case it is necessary (Benson, 2006). This is in line with the learner-centred method that guided our study and it is of an utmost importance because it ensures the development among students of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action (Benson, 2006). The rise of classroom autonomy "has led to a re-conceptualization of autonomy as a 'usable' construct for teachers who want to help their learners develop autonomy without necessarily challenging constraints of classroom and curriculum organization to which they are subject" (Benson, 2007:28). On the other hand, autonomy beyond the language classroom, where we would like to go towards with this study, involves those contexts where the student takes control over his own learning beyond the limits of a classroom and without the assistance/supervision of anybody else –i.e. in self-access centres, using CALL technologies, in tandem learning or even in self-instruction. This type of autonomous learning, as we previously explained, is a very interesting option if we want to aim at a lifelong learning model so, taking into account that most students do not come to language learning as autonomous learners (Nunan, 1997), it seems our task to prepare students for this challenge, even if it is not an easy task. It involves not only training learners to become

autonomous, but also injecting in them the need for further exploration of knowledge on their own.

The potential of autonomous learning beyond the classroom to lead to a lifelong learning model is not, however, the only reason why we want our innovation project to encourage autonomous learning. We also believe that autonomous learning could be closely related to better performance among students (Nunan, 1997; Godwin-Jones, 2001). Little (1991 –cited in Dickinson, 1995), for example, explained the connection between autonomous learning and language efficiency like this:

> Because the learner sets the agenda, learning should be more focused and more purposeful, and thus more effective both immediately and in the long term.
> (Little, 1991 – cited in Dickinson, 1995:166).

In line with this idea, Hedge (2000) actually stated that autonomous learners tended to share the qualities of "a good language learner", namely their ability to improve language skills using a series of learning strategies. This, in turn, made us assume once more that autonomous learning could presumably promote language efficiency, because in order to be a good self-directed learner, one needs to master certain learning strategies that prove to be extremely beneficial for an efficient language learning process.

4.2.2 How to foster autonomous learning

Whether it is to promote a lifelong learning model or language efficiency, we believe that to this point there is something that remains clear: any innovation project should try to foster autonomous learning beyond the classroom. The question now is: how can we do this?

A possible way of fostering autonomy is based on the belief that one can actually find out the strategies that "good language learners" use and replicate them in other learners. In section 1.1.1.4, we had already seen how certain authors (i.e. Rubin, 1975 –cited in Oxford, 2001) had tried to teach the strategies used by "good language learners" to other students in order to improve their level of proficiency. In a similar way, authors like Godwin-Jones (2001) or Hedge (2000) proposed teaching such strategies for pursuing autonomous learning. That would include the teaching of cognitive strategies –thought processes that enable the student to deal with certain information in different ways–, metacognitive strategies –i.e. planning for learning, thinking about learning, or self-monitoring–, communication strategies –strategies to keep the communication flowing, even when there is a knowledge gap–, or socio-affective strategies –

strategies to look for opportunities to practice (Hedge, 2000). The problem with this type of explicit training to turn students into autonomous learners is that: a) it must rely on the precondition that there is a learning structure where the learner is not only allowed to take responsibility, but also prepared to take it; and b) that there is controversy over whether these strategies can be actually replicated in other learners. Regarding the latter, studies trying to prove this say that success of replicating these strategies in other students depends a lot on the student itself (i.e. his/her preferred learning style) and on the context (i.e. autonomous learning is more popular in Western cultures and, thus, students here may more easily embrace these strategies than students in Eastern cultures).

Nevertheless, according to Darasawang and Reinders (2010), there is another way to foster autonomous learning: providing students with the right environment and resources for them to feel encouraged to engage in self-study. This was actually the technique we tried to use in our innovation project in order to guide students towards autonomous learning and it is a very popular option among researchers of the field.

Godwin-Jones (2001), for example, proposed that in order to promote autonomous learning among students, teachers had to follow these steps: 1) make sure students were ready to learn autonomously by using tools like the "Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire", the "Strategy Inventory for Language Learning" or the "Learning style inventory"; 2) use internet tools to encourage autonomous learning outside class –i.e. Personal Learning Environments (PLEs), translation tools, online dictionaries or websites to engage in tandems; and 3) teach students how to use these tools effectively.

In the same line, Ryan (1997) also believed that in order to prepare learners for independence, we had to teach them how to make an effective use of potential language learning materials, which could be of two types: specifically designed for language instruction –i.e. textbooks, graded readings, listening courses, radio and TV programs for English learners and so on– or primarily targeted to inform or entertain NSs of the language –i.e. newspapers, films, or TV programs among other things. As a result, Ryan's (1997) work focused on the development of a course for Japanese students where the following contents were introduced: 1) conscious-raising discussion of available resources; 2) presentation and practice of techniques to exploit resources; and 3) introduction of theoretical constructs of language acquisition underlying the selection of resources and techniques. Results of this study proved to be quite positive, as students left the course armed not only with knowledge on learning resources around them, but also armed with confidence to approach such resources.

Little (1997), however, focused on the link between authentic materials and autonomous learning specifically. This paper stated that authentic texts were directly relevant to the development of learner autonomy in two ways: 1) given that learners who were exposed to authentic texts from early stages could easily develop confidence when facing the L2; and 2) given that authentic texts reinforce the link between language learning and language use. As a result, he stated that providing students with authentic materials in the L2 classroom was the best way to prepare them to use –and keep on learning– the language in the future.

Some other authors decided in turn to focus on the use of ICTs in the language classroom in order to prepare students for a subsequent autonomous learning process. This was the case of Fuchs, Hauck and Müller-Hartmann (2012), who designed a study where web 2.0 resources were taught to pre-service teachers so that they could later exploit these resources in their classes and so that they could raise awareness of the tasks' benefits among students. Pinkman (2005), on the other hand, studied the usefulness of blogs in the EFL classroom and how to assist teachers in their use to develop learner independence –a study that, even if it did not have the expected results, it managed to point at the potential of this resource. Finally, Nowlan (2008) mentioned journals and ICTs as activities that could potentially foster autonomous language –i.e. students can use the Internet to communicate in the L2 with other people or to get exposure to the language among other things.

If we take into account all these studies and we have a look at the materials and activities that we proposed in our innovative project, we could initially assume our proposal has the potential to foster autonomous learning beyond the classroom –i.e. it is based on the use of authentic materials and ICTs, and therefore it promotes students being in touch with the language beyond the classroom. Nevertheless, we will try to justify such potential by explicitly explaining how the activities proposed can promote autonomous learning.

Let us begin by the first teaching unit, the one revolving around the use of videos. In most of these sessions, for example, we worked with a series of clips from authentic movies, TV series and documentaries, clips that could leave the students wanting more, wanting to find out how the film or the episode ended. This would be the perfect way to engage students in further autonomous learning, as we would not only have taught them what to use to keep on learning –i.e. authentic materials easily accessible and ready to prepare them for real life English– but also how to effectively manage them –i.e. using subtitles in the L2, pausing and replaying in case it was necessary, asking themselves questions about what they were hearing but also about what they were seeing and so on. Another interesting activity for the promotion of autonomous learners within this teaching unit was the subtitle workshop. In this case, we had

previously anticipated that teaching students how to translate subtitles and how to work on a software to actually insert such subtitles on the video was very interesting in order to engage students in a subsequent exploratory specialization –if students liked what they were doing (a very basic experience on subtitling), they could later feel the need to keep on practicing, to keep on learning more. As a result, teaching learners the basics on how to subtitle could also trigger a later autonomous learning process, as this task could make students work on their oral skills beyond the classroom and it could effectively connect language learning with language use (Little, 1997).

Regarding the second teaching unit, the one revolving around the use of blogs and podcasts, several things made us trust on the potential of these activities for the development of autonomous learning. First of all, the fact that students had to listen to pre-existent podcasts before they could record their own radio program had the same effect of watching clips in the previous teaching unit: if students liked a particular podcast, they could feel the need to go back to them later and even subscribe, allowing them to be in touch with the language beyond the classroom. Nevertheless, the most interesting issue to this respect was the fact that this radio station was hosted on a blog, a resource that was seen above as a potentially valid resource for autonomous learning (Pinkman, 2005) –students may like working on them and may later decide to continue using it. We must not also forget that this resource could eventually serve as a way to connect learners to the L2 world, putting them in touch with L2 speakers and allowing them to use the language for authentic purposes (Little, 1997).

4.2.3 Motivation and autonomous learning

The connection between autonomous learning and motivation is also very special since, as we could see in section 1.2.3, there is a multidirectional interconnectedness between both of them.

On the one hand, motivation and autonomous learning relate to one another given that motivation can actually lead to autonomous learning. We had already talked about how to promote autonomous learning through providing students with the right strategies or the right environment and resources, but we must not forget that another way to do so is through fostering students' motivation levels. A proof of this is the study carried out by Spratt et al. (2002), where 508 students from a university in Hong Kong completed a questionnaire regarding autonomous learning and motivation and where results pointed out that the higher the level of motivation among students was, the more frequent students engaged in outside-of-class activities regarding the L2. In the same line, Dickinson (1995) resorted to the Attribution Theory

of Motivation to explain this connection, arguing that in order to take responsibility for our own learning, we must believe that we have control over success and failure. Students who believe that failure is due to internal causes, such as ability and effort, tend to be highly motivated and tend to persist in learning, eventually engaging in self-directed learning. Finally, Nowlan (2008) stated that most students who underwent autonomous learning were motivated students who had realized that the time they devoted to language learning at school was not enough. As a result, this motivation and this eagerness to keep on learning beyond the classroom had to be passed on to other students so that, with the right assistance coming from teachers, they could all potentially become autonomous learners.

If we take this idea into account, we can state once more that our innovation project could potentially foster autonomous learning. Let us just consider that, according to the pilot study's participants, the activities of our proposal not only revolved around interesting topics, but they also complied in most cases with Dörnyei's (1994a) strategies of motivation –so they could be considered quite motivating in general. Assuming that motivation could lead to autonomous learning as it was above stated, if our proposal had the capacity to inject high levels of motivation among students, it could potentially encourage students to keep on learning outside the classroom –whether through the integrative motivational subsystem (i.e. students feeling a greater predisposition towards the L2) or through the instrumental motivational subsystem (i.e. students enjoying activities per se or the benefits of mastering the language).

On the other hand, the relationship between motivation and autonomous learning can also go in the opposite direction –that is, autonomous learning can eventually lead to higher levels of motivation among students. Spratt et al. (2002), for example, reviewed several studies before carrying out their own where it was autonomous learning what explained motivation and not the other way around –i.e. motivation was supposed to be a result of learner autonomy according to Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998) 7th commandment. The same conclusion could be extracted from Dickinson's (1995) revision of previous literature, especially where the author linked autonomous learning with the Deci and Ryan's (1985) Self-Determination Theory –i.e. an autonomy-supporting learning context provides the conditions for the development of intrinsic motivation.

This opposite direction of interconnectedness is also very interesting in order to explore the relationship between autonomous learning and effective learning. Even if we had previously revised the work of several authors who stated that autonomous learning could actually lead to a better performance among students (Dickinson, 1995; Nunan, 1997; Hedge, 2000; Godwin-Jones, 2001), the truth is that not all authors agree to this respect (Dickinson, 1995).

Nevertheless, for those doubting the connection between autonomous learning and language efficiency, we can now say that the link between autonomous learning and motivation is in turn difficult to ignore and that, as we previously found out in section 1.2.3, motivation leads to a greater use of the L2 and, subsequently, to L2 proficiency –something that would prove the connection between autonomous learning and effective learning, even if it is in an indirect way (i.e. if students feel in control of their own learning, they may feel motivated to keep on learning, they may use the language more and they may end up improving their language skills).

In conclusion, what it seems clear is that autonomous learning is closely connected to motivation, no matter the direction, and that, provided that both areas are extremely relevant for the development of language learning, their empowerment in this proposal and in related future research is a must. In this section, we have tried to explain how this empowerment was attempted in our proposal, making hypotheses of its potential success. Nevertheless, we encourage those wanting to further explore the potential of these materials and these tasks to go deeper in this area, as more objective results in this respect could actually boost the contribution of this proposal.

4.3 Conclusion

The idea behind this dissertation was to provide a solution to the limitations of the Spanish language learning system, namely the fact that Spanish EFL learners tend to underperform when compared with their European counterparts, especially regarding their oral skills. As a result, we decided to offer a proposal which could potentially tackle this problem. This proposal was designed with the following objectives in mind:

- To serve as a framework to equip language teachers with all the necessary tools for an adequate teaching of the language –especially the teaching of oral skills.
- To make a small-scale innovative contribution to the field as well as to represent the initial stage to a broader innovation process which could thoroughly improve language teaching in Spain.

Regarding objective number one, this dissertation firstly revised all pertinent literature on the field, something which could be used by teachers to make informed decisions about how to handle their classes. Then, it equipped teachers with the right tools to adequately select materials and design activities for a motivating promotion of the oral skills –i.e. through a

revision of current materials for effective language teaching, a revision of principles to design effective and motivating activities or a revision of the components of an innovative proposal.

Regarding the second objective, this dissertation proposed an innovation project which not only exemplify all the theoretical aspects previously presented –serving as a visualization of how this information could be turn into an actual proposal–, but it also attempted to make a contribution to the field of language learning in the form of an innovation experience. This innovation experience, although reduced in its scope, could be considered quite interesting because:

- Even if it worked with a reduced number of materials and tasks, it could be easily extended in the future –i.e. adding more similar materials and tasks, we could actually cover a complete academic course.
- Even if it proposed small changes in the classroom –i.e. a change of materials and activities–, it proposed the type of changes which can easily permeate upwards in the system, ultimately leading to a change of roles, methods and objectives.

The reliability of this proposal was validated by its mere design, based on solid theoretical grounds. Nevertheless, we decided that it would be interesting to actually test its potential as in some type of trial. This example of implementation, tested with a group of *Bachillerato* students attending two average public schools of the country, drew very interesting results, namely:

- That our innovative proposal had the potential to make students improve their oral skills –i.e. listening comprehension, speaking and pronunciation.
- That it was also able to promote students' motivation to a great degree, something which could also lead to more subsequent efficient learning.

These results were thus in line with the expected benefits plotted by our study, allowing us to reassure ourselves on the potential of this proposal to drive change in the field. Nevertheless, we must not forget that this study, as any other study on the field, had its limitations. For that reason, we considered future research key in order to fully develop the potential of this proposal and in order to extend change to other areas.

Finally, we must not forget that this project was also designed to ultimately lead our students towards autonomous learning. This was an area that we did not directly promote and, thus, that we did not directly test, as and it would deserve a study on its own. Nevertheless, a brief revision of the principles behind the promotion of autonomous learning made us assume

that our proposal matched the criteria to this purpose, at least through its connection with motivation. This was the perfect closing for our proposal, as we could therefore assume that such a proposal could not only meet efficiency criteria in the short term, but also in the long term: a learner that is encouraged to learn autonomously is a learner that is motivated to learn all his/her life and that is no doubt the key to proficiency.

There is only one question that remains unanswered and that could lead to subsequent reflection after reading this dissertation: could a change of materials and tasks become a driving force in the renovation of the EFL teaching system in Spanish schools? We hope that this question motivates further discussion in the future and that, in doing so, finds an adequate answer in this modest but incisive dissertation.

4.4 Conclusión

El objetivo de esta tesis doctoral es dar una solución a las limitaciones de la enseñanza de idiomas en España, pues nuestros estudiantes suelen tener un peor nivel comparado con el de los estudiantes de otros países vecinos, especialmente en lo que respecta a las competencias orales. Por este motivo, hemos decidido ofrecer una propuesta que pueda solucionar este problema de forma potencial. Nuestra propuesta se ha diseñado teniendo en cuenta los siguientes objetivos:

- Funcionar como modelo para poder equipar a los profesores de idiomas con las herramientas necesarias para una adecuada impartición del idioma, sobre todo en lo referente a las competencias orales.
- Hacer una contribución a pequeña escala en esta área que pueda también representar la fase inicial de un proceso de innovación más amplio para la mejora de la enseñanza de idiomas en España.

En lo que respecta el objetivo número uno, esta tesis revisa en primer lugar la literatura del área pertinente, algo que puede servir para que los profesores puedan tomar decisiones informadas sobre cómo manejar sus clases. Además, nuestra tesis provee a los profesores de las herramientas adecuadas para seleccionar materiales y diseñar actividades que promuevan un desarrollo de las competencias orales motivador (por ejemplo, a través de una revisión de materiales actuales para una enseñanza de idiomas eficaz, a través de una revisión de los principios para diseñar actividades motivadoras y eficaces, o a través de una revisión de los componentes de una propuesta innovadora).

En lo que respecta el segundo objetivo, esta tesis propone un proyecto de innovación que no sólo ejemplifica todos los aspectos teóricos que acabamos de presentar (y que, por tanto, nos sirve para visualizar cómo esta información se puede convertir en una propuesta de verdad), sino que además intenta hacer una contribución al área de enseñanza de idiomas a través de una experiencia de innovación. Esta experiencia de innovación, a pesar de su pequeño ámbito de acción, puede considerarse muy interesante teniendo en cuenta que:

- A pesar de que trabaja con un reducido número de materiales y actividades, puede ampliarse fácilmente en el futuro (por ejemplo, añadiendo más materiales y actividades similares podríamos llegar a cubrir un curso académico).
- Aunque propone pequeños cambios en el aula (un cambio en las actividades y en los materiales), propone el tipo de cambios que puede transmitirse fácilmente hacia altas esferas del sistema, llegando a liderar un cambio en los roles, en los métodos y en los objetivos.

La fiabilidad de esta propuesta ya se ve revalidada por su mero diseño, basado en aspectos teóricos sólidos. No obstante, pensamos que sería interesante llegar a probar su potencial con algún tipo de prueba piloto. Este ejemplo de implementación, probado con un grupo de estudiantes de bachillerato pertenecientes a dos escuelas públicas prototipo de este país, nos proporcionó unos resultados muy interesantes, como por ejemplo:

- Que nuestra propuesta de innovación tenía el potencial de hacer que los estudiantes mejoraran sus competencias orales (comprensión oral, producción oral y pronunciación).
- Que nuestra propuesta, además, era capaz de promover la motivación de los estudiantes en gran medida, algo que podía llevar también a un aprendizaje más eficaz.

Estos resultados coincidían por tanto con los beneficios que se esperaban de nuestro estudio, algo que nos permite reafirmarnos en lo que respecta al potencial de nuestra propuesta para liderar el cambio en este campo. No obstante, no podemos olvidar que este estudio, como cualquier otro estudio del área, tiene también sus limitaciones. Por ese motivo, consideramos que seguir investigando en esta línea es fundamental para poder llegar a desarrollar todo el potencial de esta propuesta y para que el cambio se pueda extender a otras áreas.

Finalmente, no podemos olvidar que este proyecto se diseñó para que, en última instancia, se orientara a nuestros estudiantes hacia un aprendizaje autónomo de la lengua. Éste es un campo que no hemos promovido directamente y que, por lo tanto, no hemos medido directamente, pues merece un estudio por separado. Sin embargo, tras presentar una breve revisión de los principios que sustentan la promoción del aprendizaje autónomo, nos dimos cuenta que nuestra propuesta coincidía con los criterios de este tipo de aprendizaje, al menos en lo relativo a la motivación. De esta forma, nuestra propuesta representa una propuesta redonda, pues no sólo cumple con el principio de eficacia en la enseñanza de idiomas a corto plazo, sino también a largo plazo: un estudiante al que se le anima a aprender de forma autónoma es un estudiante que se siente motivado para seguir aprendiendo el idioma durante toda su vida y eso, no cabe duda, es fundamental para alcanzar un nivel experto.

Sólo nos queda una pregunta sin resolver, que nos lleva a la reflexión tras leer esta tesis: ¿un cambio en los materiales y actividades que se usan en el aula puede llevar a liderar el cambio en la renovación del sistema de enseñanza de idiomas en las escuelas españolas? Esperamos que esta pregunta dé lugar a un ulterior debate en el futuro y que, en esta tarea, nos permita encontrar una respuesta en esta modesta pero incisiva tesis doctoral.

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APPENDIX A

Treatment – Teaching units

School 1

Unit 1: Working with videos

SESSION 1

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (5 m.)	**Warm-up** Brainstorm of ideas about the key topics of the videos presented, namely: - Stereotypes - Decisions about educational path - Family meals - Weddings - Tipping	- Defining concepts - Expressing opinions and points of views - Understanding other NNSs interlocutors	X	X			X				- Blackboard
2. (40 m.)	**Interaction with videos** - Students are shown some videos with controversial cross-cultural references. - At some point, the teacher stops the video and students have to decide in couples/small groups what is going to happen next. - Students share with the rest of the class what they have decided within their groups. - Teacher plays the rest of the video so that students can see what actually happened	- Understanding the general message of an authentic text (interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages). - Getting in touch and understand a wide variety of accents (NSs and NNSs) - Communicating with peers to solve a problem.	X	X			X	X			- Computer - Video - Overhead projector - Speakers
3. (10 m.)	**Debate** Students must discuss in groups why their proposals were different from the images in the video if so.	- Expressing opinions and points of views. - Communicating with peers to solve a problem.	X	X				X			

SESSION 2

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (15 m.)	**Warm-up** - Teacher shows students the case of the movie *Bend it like Beckham.* Students divide in two groups: those who have seen the movie and those who have not. - Students work in groups: • Those who have watched the film try to remember the plot. • Those who haven't try to image what the movie is about. - Students who have not watched the film share with the rest their thoughts. Students who have watched the film tell them if their guesses were right or not. (If there are no students in any of the 2 groups, activity will be discussed as a whole class).	- Narrating a story - Express opinions and points of view - Communicating with peers to solve a problem. - Understanding other NNSs interlocutors	X	X			X	X			- Film case
2. (25 m.)	**Interaction with videos** - Students watch 2 selected clips of the film. - Students complete with their partner a handout in which they are asked about their opinions and points of views on given aspects which appear in the videos.	- Understanding the general message of an authentic text (interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages).	X	X			X		X		- Computer - Video - Overhead projector - Speakers - Handout
3. (15 m.)	**Debate** Students share their answers with their classmates and try to reflect on the reactions/effect that these videos produce on them (in groups).	- Expressing opinions and points of views. - Communicating with peers to solve a problem.	X	X				X			

SESSION 3

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (5 m.)	**Warm-up** Teacher brings up the topic of popular celebrations in English-speaking countries. Brainstorming of ideas (which are the most popular celebrations and what do students know about them).	- Defining concepts - Expressing opinions and points of views - Understanding other NNSs interlocutors	X	X			X				- Blackboard
2. (35 m.)	**Videos about three popular celebrations** - Students watch three videos about St. Patrick's Day (documentary), Thanksgiving (sitcom) and Halloween (film). - Students must write down the answers to some questions related to the video itself and to general reflections about these celebrations. - Teacher corrects the questionnaire out loud.	- Understanding specific information in an authentic text (Interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages).	X			X	X			X	- Computer - Video - Overhead projector - Speakers - Handout
3. (15 m.)	**Debate** Following the reflections raised on the previous exercise, students must discuss in groups how these festivities are seen and lived on English-speaking countries.	- Expressing opinions and points of views. - Communicating with peers to solve a problem.	X	X				X			

SESSION 4

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (15 m.)	**Introduction to the general principles of audiovisual translation** - Teacher provides some handouts where there is a summary of: *Basic principles of translation *Basic principles of subtitling - Students read the photocopies. - Teacher explains and highlights the most important points.	- Understanding specific information on a lecture of an abstract topic. - Understanding instructions.	X		X		X			X	Handouts
2. (10 m.)	**Getting familiarized with the "Subtitle Workshop" software** Teacher explains how the software works	- Understanding specific information on a lecture of an abstract topic.	X				X				- Computer - Subtitling software
3. (15 m.)	**Sample – Video with subtitles** - Teacher provides a video about cultural differences in UK/US with a proposal of Spanish subtitles. - Students must take notes of all the special characteristics of subtitling that they can observe. - Students talk in groups about those characteristics and address doubts to the teacher. Then, they share their ideas with the rest of their classmates.	- Understanding a text in great detail (interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages). - Expressing opinions and points of view - Communicating with peers to solve a problem. - Understanding other NNSs interlocutors	X	X		X	X	X		X	- Computer - Video - Overhead projector - Speakers
4. (15 m.)	**Trial – Getting started with subtitling** - Students have to watch another video about cultural differences in UK/US and provide some suitable translations for the three subtitles missing (in pairs). - Students share their proposal with the rest of the class.	- Understanding a text in great detail (interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages). - Understanding other NNSs interlocutors	X	X			X		X		- Computer - Video - Subtitling software

SESSION 5

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (5 m.)	**Warm-up** Revision of everything explained on the previous session.	- Understanding specific information on a lecture of an abstract topic.	X				X				
2. (30 m.)	**Subtitling a video with offset already given** - Students must provide subtitles for a video about cultural differences in UK/US. Offset is already given, so students should try to fit their proposals in the given times. - Teacher shows students a translation proposal and highlights the main translation challenges. Students discuss those challenges and talk about how they dealt with them.	- Understanding a text in great detail (interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages). - Communicating with peers to solve a problem.	X	X		X	X		X		- Computer - Video - Subtitling software
3. (20 m.)	**Subtitling a video without ready-made offset** Teacher translates the subtitles of a video about cultural differences in UK/US together with the students. This time, offset must be decided among everyone.	- Understanding a text in great detail (interpreting verbal and non-verbal messages). - Communicating with peers to solve a problem.	X	X			X				- Computer - Video - Subtitling software - Overhead projector - Speakers

School 2

Unit 1: Radiostation (Podcasts & Blogs)

SESSION 1

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (15 m.)	**Warm-up** Students are given a link where they can listen to several news broadcasts. (http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/)	- Understanding the general message of an authentic text.	X						X		- Computer - Internet access - Headphones
2. (40 m.)	**Preparing the news broadcast** - Students select a piece of news that they want to perform and record. - Students carefully analyze the text and how it was read. Students are encouraged to follow the transcript in order to do so. - Students rehearse in pairs their piece of news.	- Communicating with peers to solve a problem. - Understanding specific information in an authentic text. - Identifying and recreating prosody of an authentic text.	X	X	X				X		- Computer - Internet access - Headphones
3. (10 m.)	**Recording of the news and uploading in the class' blog** - Students record their news (LANGUAGE LAB?) - Students upload file to class' blog.	- Identifying and recreating prosody of an authentic text.	X	X					X		- Computer - Internet access - Headphones - Recording software - Microphones - Blog

SESSION 2

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (15 m.)	**Warm-up** Students are given a link where they can listen to several debate broadcasts. (http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/)	- Understanding the general message of an authentic text.	X						X		- Computer - Internet access - Headphones
2. (40 m.)	**Preparing the debate** - Students select a topic they want to talk about in small groups. - Students prepare more or less the different roles they are going to fulfill (for, against, presenter…) and the ideas they want to present. - Students rehearse their debate.	- Expressing opinions and points of views. - Communicating with peers to solve a problem. - Structuring a speech.	X	X				X			
3. (10 m.)	**Recording of the debate and uploading in the class' blog** - Students record their debate (LANGUAGE LAB?) - Students upload file to class' blog.	- Expressing opinions and points of views. - Interacting with peers in a spontaneous conversation.	X	X				X			- Computer - Internet access - Headphones - Recording software - Microphones - Blog

SESSION 3

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (15 m.)	**Warm-up** Students are given a link where they can listen to several storytelling broadcasts. (http://www.learnoutloud.com/Podcast-Directory/Literature/Short-Stories/1#go)	- Understanding the general message of an authentic text.	X						X		- Computer - Internet access - Headphones
2. (40 m.)	**Preparing the debate** - Students think of a story they want to tell. - Students write a short script (not a real script, something that gives them freedom to improvise). - Students rehearse the story.	- Communicating with peers to solve a problem. - Narrating a story. - Interacting in a partly-spontaneous conversation.	X	X				X			
3. (10 m.)	**Recording of the debate and uploading in the class' blog** - Students record their story (LANGUAGE LAB?) - Students upload file to class' blog.	- Narrating a story. - Interacting with peers in a spontaneous conversation. - Using prosody to achieve a certain goal.	X	X				X			- Computer - Internet access - Headphones - Recording software - Microphones - Blog

SESSION 4

Step (time)	Activities	Communication (functions)	Skills				Grouping				Materials
			L	S	R	W	C	G	P	I	
1. (15 m.)	**Warm-up** Students are given a link where they can listen to several commercials.	- Understanding the general message of an authentic text.	X						X		- Computer - Internet access - Headphones
2. (40 m.)	**Preparing the news broadcast** - Students select one or two commercials that they want to perform and record. - Students carefully analyze the text and how it was performed. Students are encouraged to follow the transcript in order to do so. - Students rehearse in pairs their commercials.	- Communicating with peers to solve a problem. - Understanding specific information in an authentic text. - Identifying and recreating prosody of an authentic text.	X	X	X				X		- Computer - Internet access - Headphones
3. (10 m.)	**Recording of the commercials and uploading in the class' blog** - Students record their news (LANGUAGE LAB?) - Students upload file to class' blog.	- Identifying and recreating prosody of an authentic text. - Using prosody to achieve a certain goal.	X	X					X		- Computer - Internet access - Headphones - Recording software - Microphones - Blog

APPENDIX B

Handouts activities (School 1)

Session 1

Video – Crosscultural references

Video 1 – Decision about studies

Try to think of how the discussion follows. Will the get to an agreement?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Video 2 – Family meals

Try to describe how the meal is going to be (where they are going to be, what they are going to say…)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Video 3 – Weddings

In your opinion, why does Ria say it is not a good idea that Adidi gets married?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Video 4 – Weddings

In your opinion, why does Ria say it is not a good idea that Adidi gets married?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Video 5 – Tipping

What do you think is going to happen next?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Session 2

Video – Bend it like Beckham

Scene 1 (9'27-15'50)

1. Jess is presented as a very particular girl, different from the other girls in her community. How is it shown in the film?

2. When Jules proposes Jess to join her football team, all the boys laugh at them. Why do you think is that? Is it so weird to connect football and women?

3. According to the film, was it difficult to set a female football team in England? Is it easier to play professionally somewhere else?

4. Why do you think the girls' parents may be concerned about their daughters playing football?

Scene 2 (19'30-23.34)

1. Why do you think Jess' parents do not want her to play football? List all possible reason they may have.

2. In Jess' culture, women have a very specific role in society and are usually subordinated to men. Can you list some examples from the conversation that Jess and her parents are having?

3. How can this culture affect young women like Jess, who lives in a country where women have different roles?

Session 3

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day is one of the most famous holidays in the world. It falls on February the 14th and is celebrated across the world. It is the traditional day for lovers to express their love to each other. Valentine's Day used to be an American and European thing, but now it has gone all over the world and it has become very commercial.

We will now watch a documentary about the history of this holiday and how it is celebrated (http://www.watchmojo.com/video/id/11508/#social). Watch the video and answer the questions.

1. Who was the person who inspired this celebration? Which heroic gesture made him famous and led him to death?

2. What kind of relationship did he have with his jailer's daughter? What was the last thing he wrote for her?

3. Why did the Church decide that February 14th was going to be St. Valentine's Day? What other ancient celebration was celebrated on that date?

4. When did St. Valentine's cards appear for the first time?

5. What other things do people give each other on St. Valentine's Day? Do people only give present to their romantic partners?

THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgivings or Thanksgiving Day, celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November, has officially been an annual tradition in the United States since 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of thanksgiving to be celebrated on Thursday, November 26.

The event that Americans commonly call the "First Thanksgiving" was celebrated to give thanks to God for helping the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony survive their first brutal winter in New England. The first Thanksgiving feast lasted three days, providing enough food for 53 pilgrims and 90 Native Americans.

Thanksgiving Day in America is a time to offer thanks, of family gatherings and holiday meals. A time of turkeys, stuffing and pumpkin pie. A time for Indian corn, holiday parades and giant balloons.

Here you have a video where you can see how this day is dealt on a popular American sitcom. Watch the video and answer the questions.

(15.45- 21.10)

It's Thanksgiving Day and Monica has prepared a wonderful meal for everyone as every year… but now she won't let the others in.

1) How is Joey planning to get in?
2) Why are Monica and Chandler mad at the rest? Why are they not letting them in?
3) For a minute, Monica decides to let them in but then she changes her mind again. Why was that so?
4) Joey gets stuck at the door. How do the others react?
5) Write down all the food that is mentioned throughout the video.
6) Why do you think it is so important for them to come in to celebrate Thanksgiving?

HALLOWEEN

Halloween (or Hallowe'en) is an annual holiday observed on October 31, which commonly includes activities such as trick-or-treating, attending costume parties, carving jack-o'-lanterns, bonfires, apple bobbing, visiting haunted attractions, playing pranks, telling scary stories and watching horror films.

Halloween was first celebrated by the Celts who lived in Britain, Ireland and parts of France over 2,000 years ago and who celebrated the end of the year on October 31st. The Celts believed that ghosts came back to earth on this day. Today many people around the world celebrate this old festival - but today people usually have parties, dress up, and tell spooky stories about witches, skeletons, bats and ghosts.

Many movies have used Halloween as an excuse to bring up scary/fictional stories. Hocus Pocus is one of these examples:

"In the year 1693, sisters Winifred, Mary and Sarah were executed for their unforgivable witchcraft –they captured and sucked the life out of children. Just before their execution, Winifred made a curse so that they were able to return if somebody lit the black candle. 300 years later, Max decides to light the candle in order to scare his sister Dani and his wannabe girlfriend Alison. Now, the three Witches are back and ready for a night of fun, magic and horror in the modern Salem."

1) *Watch the clip and answer the questions (45.45 - 57.40).*
    a. *Why are the witches confused when they get off the bus? Why are they happy to see the owner of the house in front of them?*
    b. *Why does the officer do not help the kids when they approach him?*
    c. *What kind of things do the witches misinterpret in "Satan's house"?*
        i. *They think he has married_____.*
        ii. *They think the kitchen is a_____.*
        iii. *They think he gave them_____ instead of candy.*
    d. *What do Max and Dani's parents think when they tell them about the witches? What about the rest of the people in the party?*

2) *Watch the clip again and try to list all the Halloween typical things that you can see*

APPENDIX C

Screen captures – Blog (School 2)

https://radiostationginer.wordpress.com/

Session 1

Session 2

PROTEGIDO: A DEBATE

Which is your favourite debate?

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Group 4

Vote

View Results Polldaddy.com

– https://archive.org/embed/G1ClaudiaRosieGemaAndreaJC

– https://archive.org/embed/G2LunaMartaPatricia

– https://archive.org/embed/G3LuciaHilaryLauraAparicioYolanda

– https://archive.org/embed/G4LauraBaezaOlgaRocioMoad

Posted on 20 mayo, 2014 Deja un comentario

Session 3


PROTEGIDO: A SHORT STORY
Which is your favourite short story?
G1
G2
G3
G4
G5
Vote
View Results PollDaddy.com
– https://archive.org/embed/G1GemaClaudiaRosieAndreaKevin
– https://archive.org/embed/G2LunaMartaDianaPatriciaAndCedi
– https://archive.org/embed/G3YolandaCarmenHilaryAndLaura
– https://archive.org/embed/G4LauraRocioOlgaAndMoad
– https://archive.org/embed/G5JavierRomanMariaAndreaAlcobendas
Posted on 23 mayo, 2014 Deja un comentario

Session 4

RADIOSTATION GINER

PROTEGIDO: RADIO COMMERCIALS

– https://archive.org/embed/G1PatriciaLunaDianaMartaCOMPLETE

– https://archive.org/embed/G2JavierRomanMariaAndreaAlcobendasCOMPLETE

– https://archive.org/embed/G3GemaClaudiaRosieCOMPLETE

– https://archive.org/embed/G4YolandaCarmenLauraCOMPLETE

– https://archive.org/embed/G5RocioLauraBaezaMoadOlgaVelascoCOMPLETE

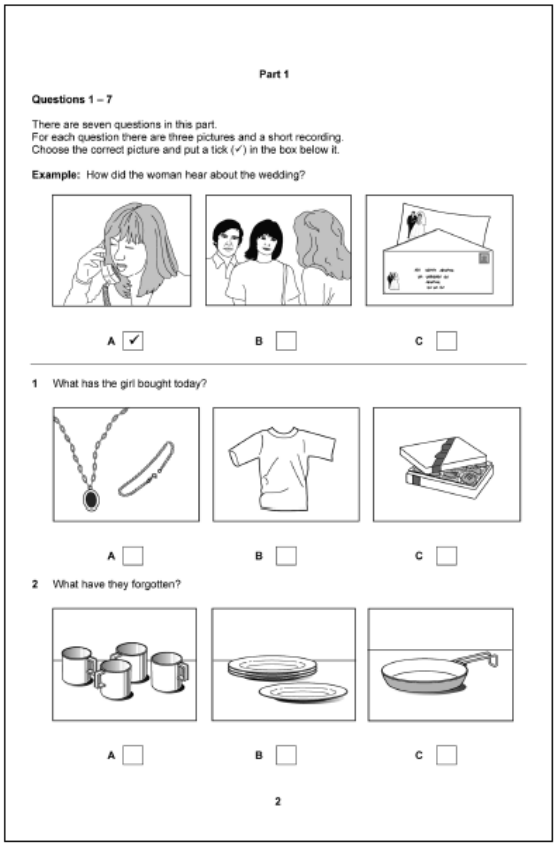
Posted on 3 junio, 2014 Deja un comentario

APPENDIX D

Research Instruments

Listening tests

Test 1



Part 1

Questions 1 – 7

There are seven questions in this part.
For each question there are three pictures and a short recording.
Choose the correct picture and put a tick (✓) in the box below it.

Example: How did the woman hear about the wedding?

A ☑ B ☐ C ☐

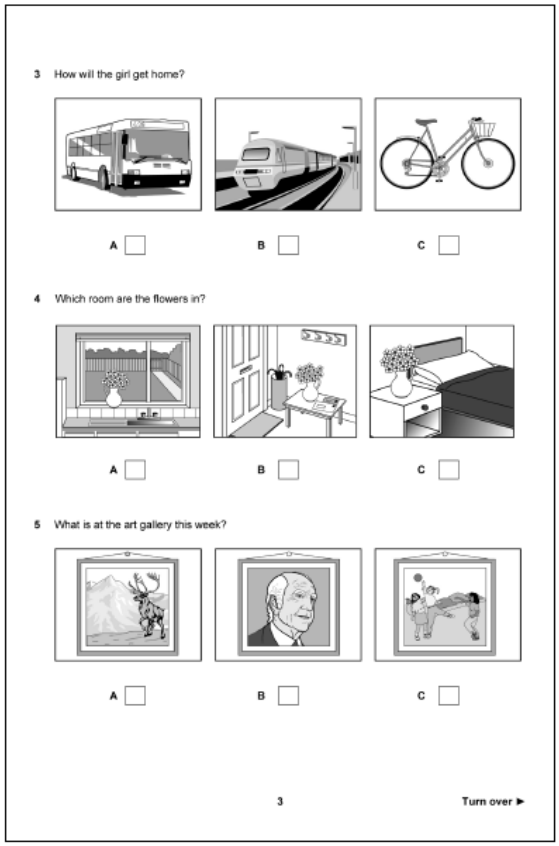
1 What has the girl bought today?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

2 What have they forgotten?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

2



3 How will the girl get home?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

4 Which room are the flowers in?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

5 What is at the art gallery this week?

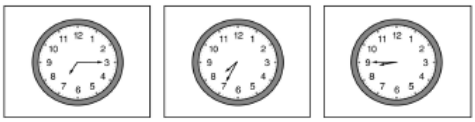
A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

3 Turn over ►

6 Which is the woman's suitcase?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

7 What time does the woman's flight leave?



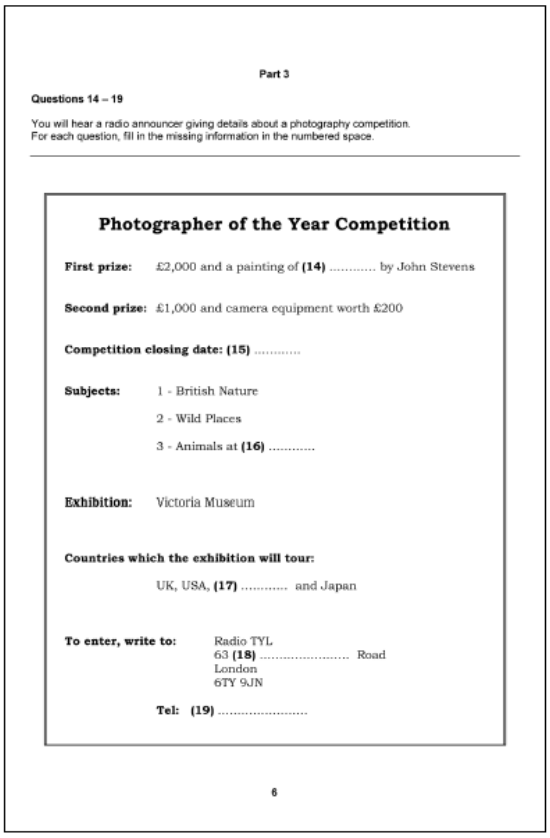
A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

Part 2

Questions 8 – 13

You will hear a radio interview with Darren Hubbard, a runner who takes part in athletics competitions. For each question, put a tick (✓) in the correct box.

8	At the February competition, Darren	A	ran in a new event. ☐
		B	hurt himself. ☐
		C	came last. ☐
9	Darren's situation began to improve when he	A	started a job with fewer hours. ☐
		B	was offered a place on the British team. ☐
		C	signed a contract with a sportswear company. ☐
10	Darren got fit again quickly because he	A	changed the way he trained. ☐
		B	started to work with a new trainer. ☐
		C	increased the time he spends training. ☐
11	Darren wants to win his next athletics competition so that he can	A	retire early. ☐
		B	pay for his wedding. ☐
		C	show people that he is fit. ☐
12	In the next competition, Darren will run the 400-metre race on	A	the first day. ☐
		B	the second day. ☐
		C	the third day. ☐
13	In the future, Darren	A	hopes to write about his career. ☐
		B	wants to change the distance he runs. ☐
		C	would like more people to recognise him. ☐



Part 3

Questions 14 – 19

You will hear a radio announcer giving details about a photography competition.
For each question, fill in the missing information in the numbered space.

Photographer of the Year Competition

First prize: £2,000 and a painting of **(14)** ..... by John Stevens

Second prize: £1,000 and camera equipment worth £200

Competition closing date: (15) .....

Subjects: 1 - British Nature
2 - Wild Places
3 - Animals at **(16)** .....

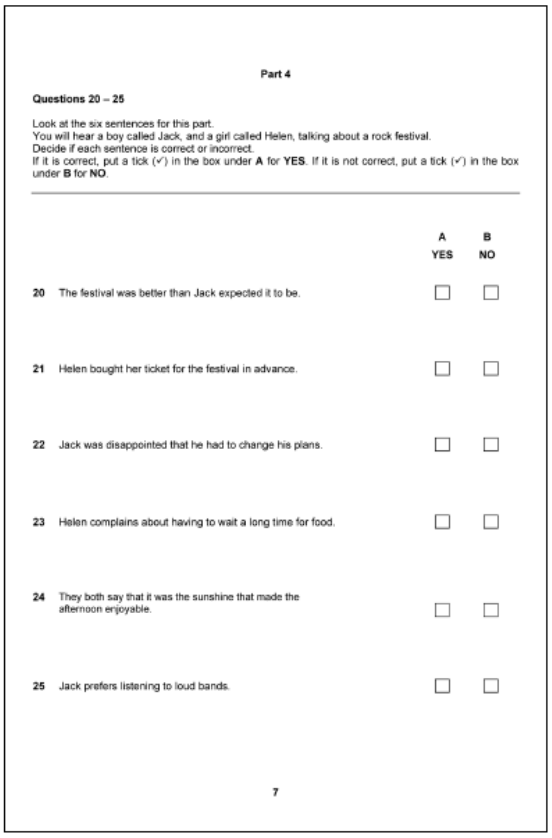
Exhibition: Victoria Museum

Countries which the exhibition will tour:
UK, USA, **(17)** ..... and Japan

To enter, write to: Radio TYL
63 **(18)** ..... Road
London
6TY 9JN

Tel: (19) .....

6



Part 4

Questions 20 – 25

Look at the six sentences for this part.
You will hear a boy called Jack, and a girl called Helen, talking about a rock festival.
Decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect.
If it is correct, put a tick (✓) in the box under **A** for **YES**. If it is not correct, put a tick (✓) in the box under **B** for **NO**.

		A YES	B NO
20	The festival was better than Jack expected it to be.	☐	☐
21	Helen bought her ticket for the festival in advance.	☐	☐
22	Jack was disappointed that he had to change his plans.	☐	☐
23	Helen complains about having to wait a long time for food.	☐	☐
24	They both say that it was the sunshine that made the afternoon enjoyable.	☐	☐
25	Jack prefers listening to loud bands.	☐	☐

7

Answer key

Q	Part 1
1	B
2	C
3	B
4	C
5	B
6	A
7	C

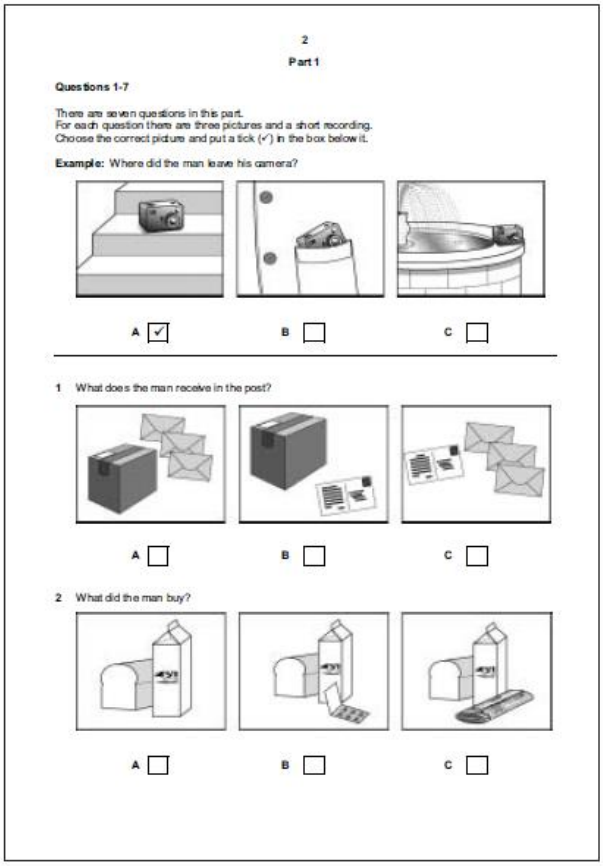
Q	Part 2
8	B
9	C
10	A
11	B
12	B
13	C

Q	Part 3
14	elephant(s)
15	14(th) May
16	night
17	France
18	Beechwood
19	0163 55934

Brackets ( ) indicate optional words or letters

Q	Part 4
20	B
21	A
22	A
23	B
24	B
25	A

Test 2



2

Part 1

Questions 1-7

There are seven questions in this part.
For each question there are three pictures and a short recording.
Choose the correct picture and put a tick (✓) in the box below it.

Example: Where did the man leave his camera?

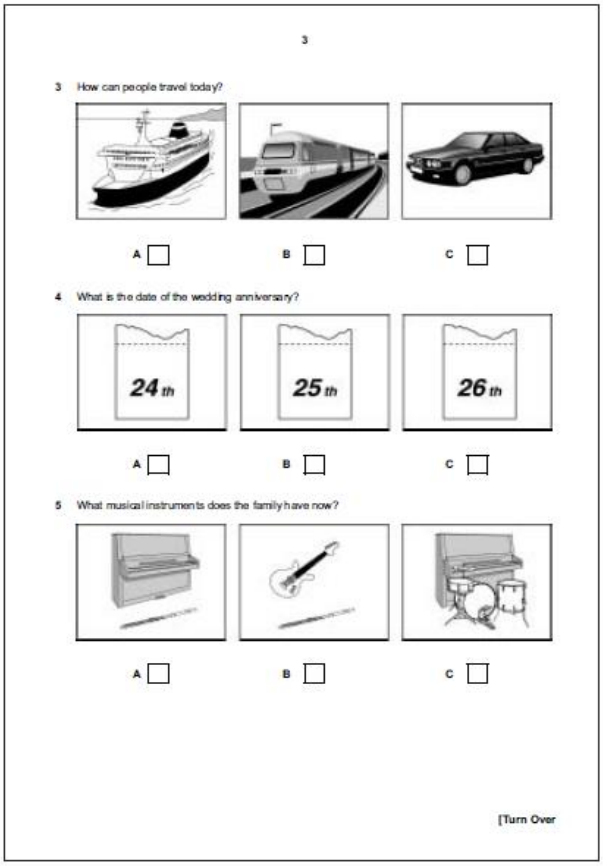
A ☑ B ☐ C ☐

1 What does the man receive in the post?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

2 What did the man buy?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐



3

3 How can people travel today?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

4 What is the date of the wedding anniversary?

24th 25th 26th

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

5 What musical instruments does the family have now?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

[Turn Over

4

6 What's the weather like in the mountains?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

7 How did the woman learn about the fire?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

5

Part 2

Questions 8-13

You will hear someone reviewing tonight's television programmes.
For each question, put a tick (✓) in the correct box.

8	The film about insects is	A badly photographed. B unsuitable for some people. C much too long.	☐ ☐ ☐
9	Tonight's *Miller and Edwards* programme	A has fewer jokes than usual. B is longer than usual. C is continued next week.	☐ ☐ ☐
10	*Policewatch* is not on television tonight because	A another programme has taken its place. B Andy McKay is ill. C you can't see it on Thursdays any more.	☐ ☐ ☐
11	What does the reviewer say about *Stardate 3000*?	A It has expensive scenery. B It took two months to make. C The stories could be better.	☐ ☐ ☐
12	What is different about *Doctors in Town*?	A The main actors have changed. B It is now filmed in Australia. C There is a new director.	☐ ☐ ☐
13	From tomorrow, *TV Diary* will be shown	A after the tennis matches. B at a later time. C at 6.30 in the evening.	☐ ☐ ☐

[Turn Over

6

Part 3

Questions 14-19

You will hear a tour guide talking to some new guests at their hotel.
For each question, fill in the missing information in the numbered space.

The Riverside Hotel

Tour Guide

The office is **(14)** ..... the reception desk.

Meals

Breakfast: in the Green Room on the first floor beside the lifts.
Food for trips: collect from the **(15)** ..... at 9.00 a.m.
Dinner: hotel restaurant famous for its **(16)** ..... dishes.

Riverboat Trip

Day: **(17)** .....

Time: afternoon and evening

Cost of Holiday

Everything is included except **(18)** .....

Facilities

It's possible to swim from **(19)** ..... a.m. until 10.00 p.m.

7

Part 4

Questions 20-25

Look at the six sentences for this part.
You will hear a conversation between a girl, Lucy, and a boy, Edward, about pocket money.
Decide if each sentence is correct or incorrect.
If it is correct, put a tick (✓) in the box under **A** for **YES**. If it is not correct, put a tick (✓) in the box under **B** for **NO**.

		A YES	B NO
20	At first, Edward thinks Lucy gets enough pocket money.	☐	☐
21	Lucy's friends get more pocket money than she does.	☐	☐
22	Lucy is happy to pay for her own music.	☐	☐
23	Edward understands why Lucy's mother refuses to pay for housework.	☐	☐
24	Lucy's mother has promised her more pocket money next year.	☐	☐
25	Edward thinks that Lucy should stop asking for more pocket money.	☐	☐

KEY FOR SAMPLE TEST 1

Part 1	
1	C
2	A
3	B
4	C
5	A
6	C
7	B

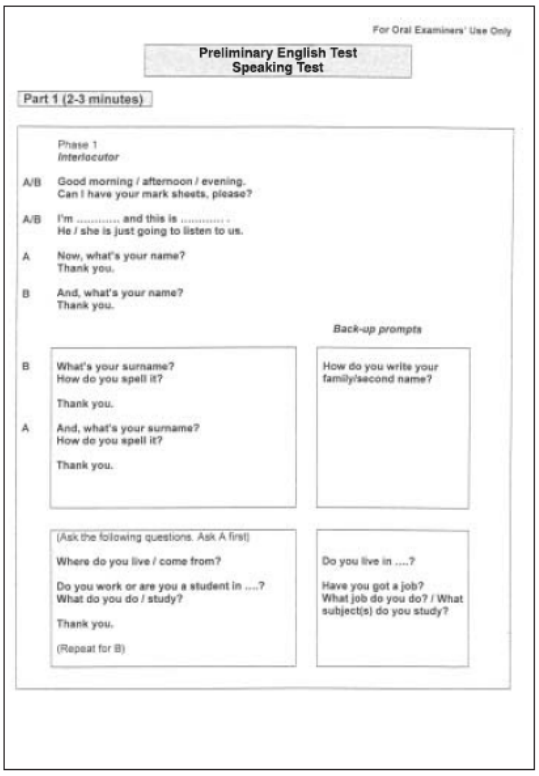
Part 2	
8	B
9	B
10	A
11	C
12	A
13	C

Part 4	
20	A
21	B
22	B
23	A
24	B
25	B

Part 3 Recognisable spelling is accepted except where indicated. Brackets indicate optional words.	
14	O/opposite
15	(the) K/kitchen
16	F/fish (correctly spelled) (D/dishes)
17	S/Saturday
18	L/lunch(e) **Allow**: S/sandwiches
19	6.30 (a.m.) (in the morning) **Allow**: 06:30 6,30 S/six T/thirty

Speaking tests

Test 1



For Oral Examiners' Use Only

Preliminary English Test
Speaking Test

Part 1 (2-3 minutes)

Phase 1
Interlocutor

A/B Good morning / afternoon / evening.
Can I have your mark sheets, please?

A/B I'm ..... and this is ..... .
He / she is just going to listen to us.

A Now, what's your name?
Thank you.

B And, what's your name?
Thank you.

Back-up prompts

B What's your surname?
How do you spell it?

Thank you.

A And, what's your surname?
How do you spell it?

Thank you.

How do you write your family/second name?

(Ask the following questions. Ask A first)

Where do you live / come from?

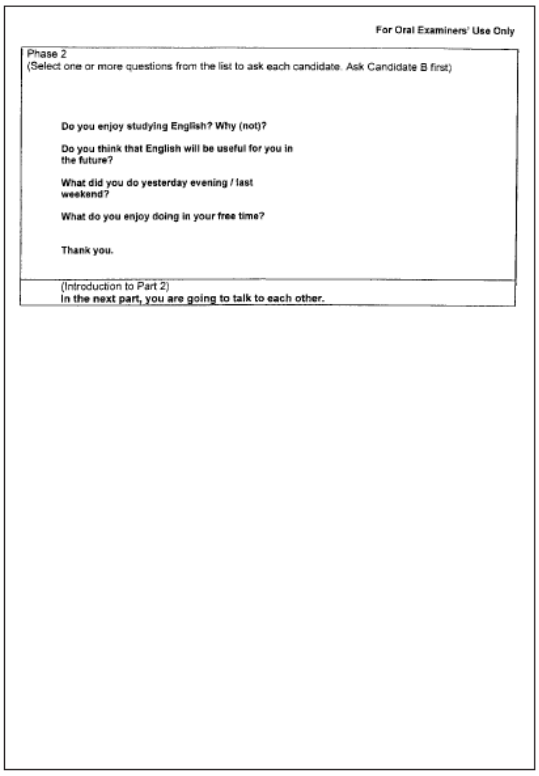
Do you work or are you a student in ....?
What do you do / study?

Thank you.

(Repeat for B)

Do you live in ....?

Have you got a job?
What job do you do? / What subject(s) do you study?



For Oral Examiners' Use Only

Phase 2
(Select one or more questions from the list to ask each candidate. Ask Candidate B first)

Do you enjoy studying English? Why (not)?

Do you think that English will be useful for you in the future?

What did you do yesterday evening / last weekend?

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Thank you.

(Introduction to Part 2)
In the next part, you are going to talk to each other.

Preliminary English Test

Part 2 (2 - 3 minutes) — Speaking Test (Trip to England)

Interlocutor

Say to both candidates:

I'm going to describe a situation to you.

A friend of yours is planning to spend 6 months in **England** to improve her English. Talk together about the things she will **need** in England, and decide which are the most important things to **take / bring** with her.

Here is a picture with some ideas to help you.

*Hand over **Picture Sheet** to the candidates.*
***N.B.** One A3 sheet to be shared.*

Pause

I'll say that again.

A friend of yours is planning to spend 6 months in **England** to improve her English. Talk together about the things she will **need** in England, and decide which are the most important things to **take / bring** with her.

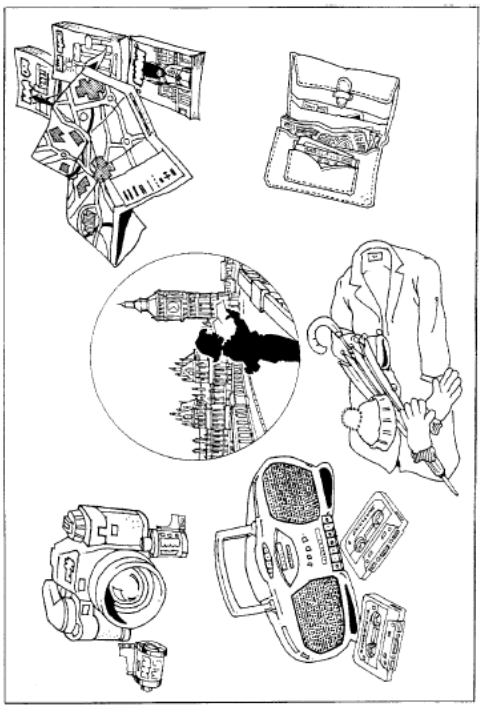
All right? Talk together.

Allow the candidates enough time to complete the task without intervention. Prompt only if necessary.

Thank you.

Time About **2 - 3 minutes** (including time to assimilate the information).

Sample Material - Part 2



Preliminary English Test

Part 3 (3 minutes) — Speaking Test (Reading and writing)

Interlocutor

Say to both candidates:

Now, I'd like each of you to talk on your own about something. I'm going to give each of you a photograph of people **reading** and **writing**.

Candidate A, here's your photograph. *(Hand one of the photographs to Candidate A.)* Please show it to Candidate B, but I'd like you to talk about it. Candidate B, you just listen. I'll give you your photograph in a moment.

Candidate A, please tell us what you can see in your photograph.

(Candidate A)

Approximately one minute.

If there is a need to intervene, prompts rather than direct questions should be used.

Thank you.

Retrieve photograph from Candidate A.

Now, Candidate B, here's your photograph. It also shows **reading** and **writing**. *(Hand the second photograph to Candidate B).* Please show it to Candidate A and tell us what you can see in the photograph.

(Candidate B)

Approximately one minute.

Thank you.

Retrieve photograph from Candidate B.

Part 4 (3 minutes)

Interlocutor

Say to both candidates:

Your photographs showed people reading and writing. Now, I'd like you to talk together about the different kinds of reading and writing **you** did when you were **younger**, and the kinds you do **now**.

Allow the candidates enough time to complete the task without intervention. Prompt only if necessary.

Thank you. That's the end of the test.

Time **Parts 3 & 4** should take about **6 minutes** together.

Sample Material - Part 3

Test 2

Part 1 (2-3 minutes)

Phase 1
Interlocutor

A/B Good morning / afternoon / evening.
Can I have your mark sheets, please?

(Hand over the mark sheets to the Assessor.)

A/B I'm ..... and this is ..... .
He / she is just going to listen to us.

A Now, what's your name?
Thank you.

B And what's your name?
Thank you.

		Back-up prompts
B	Candidate B, what's your surname? How do you spell it? Thank you.	How do you write your family / second name?
A	And, Candidate A, what's your surname? How do you spell it? Thank you.	How do you write your family / second name?
	(Ask the following questions. Ask Candidate A first.) Where do you live / come from? Do you study English at school? Do you like it? Thank you. *(Repeat for Candidate B.)*	Do you live in ...? Do you have English lessons?

Phase 2
Interlocutor

(Select one or more questions from the list to ask each candidate. Use candidates' names throughout. Ask Candidate B first.)

What's your favourite school subject? Why?

Tell us about your English teacher.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Tell us about your family.

Thank you.

(Introduction to Part 2)
In the next part, you are going to talk to each other.

Part 2 (2-3 minutes)

Interlocutor
Say to both candidates:

I'm going to describe a situation to you.

A boy is **leaving** his school because his parents are going to work in **another country**. The students in his class want to give him a **present**. Talk together about the **different** presents they could give him and then decide which would be **best**.

Here is a picture with some ideas to help you.

*Place **Part 2 booklet**, open at **Task 1**, in front of candidates.*

Pause

I'll say that again.

A boy is **leaving** his school because his parents are going to work in **another country**. The students in his class want to give him a **present**. Talk together about the **different** presents they could give him and then decide which would be **best**.

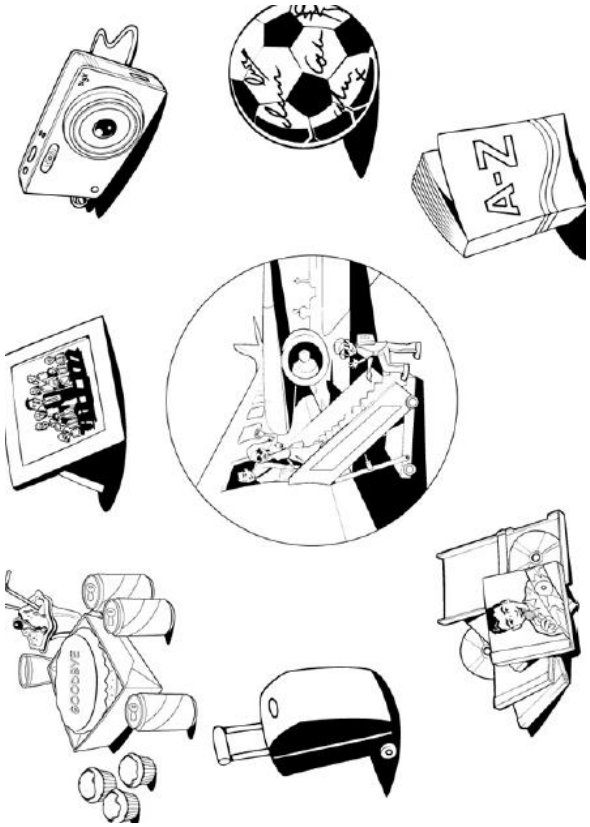
All right? Talk together.

Allow the candidates enough time to complete the task without intervention. Prompt only if necessary.

Thank you. (Can I have the booklet please?)

Retrieve Part 2 booklet.

About **2-3 minutes** (including time to assimilate the information)



Speaking Test 1 (Teenage bedroom)

Part 3 (3 minutes)

Interlocutor *Say to both candidates:*

Now, I'd like each of you to talk on your own about something. I'm going to give each of you a photograph of teenagers in their **bedrooms at home**.

Candidate A, here is your photograph. *(Place **Part 3 booklet**, open at **Task 1A**, in front of Candidate A.)* Please show it to Candidate B, but I'd like you to talk about it. Candidate B, you just listen. I'll give you your photograph in a moment.

Candidate A, please tell us what you can see in your photograph.

(Candidate A) *Approximately one minute*

If there is a need to intervene, prompts rather than direct questions should be used.

Thank you. (Can I have the booklet please?)

Retrieve Part 3 booklet from Candidate A.

Interlocutor

Now, Candidate B, here is your photograph. It also shows a teenager in his **bedroom at home**. *(Place **Part 3 booklet**, open at **Task 1B**, in front of Candidate B.)* Please show it to Candidate A and tell us what you can see in the photograph.

(Candidate B) *Approximately one minute*

Thank you. (Can I have the booklet please?)

Retrieve Part 3 booklet from Candidate B.

Part 4 (3 minutes)

Interlocutor *Say to both candidates:*

Your photographs showed teenagers in their **bedrooms at home**. Now, I'd like you to talk together about the things you have in **your** bedrooms at home **now** and the things you'd like to have in your bedrooms in the **future**.

Allow the candidates enough time to complete the task without intervention. Prompt only if necessary.

Thank you. That's the end of the test.

Parts 3 & 4 should take about **6 minutes** together.

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Pronunciation assessment handout

PRONUNCIATION ASSESSMENT CHART

TEST 1

#Student 1: _____

	1	2	3	4	5
Segmentals (Phonemes/sounds)					
Intonation					
Stress and Rhythm					

#Student 2:_____

	1	2	3	4	5
Segmentals (Phonemes/sounds)					
Intonation					
Stress and Rhythm					

TEST 2

#Student 1:_____

	1	2	3	4	5
Segmentals (Phonemes/sounds)					
Intonation					
Stress and Rhythm					

#Student 2:_____

	1	2	3	4	5
Segmentals (Phonemes/sounds)					
Intonation					
Stress and Rhythm					

DESCRIPTORS FOR EACH CATEGORY

Segmentals *(Use of wrong individual sounds does not hinder intelligibility[7])*

- Vowels (Alphabet + Relative vowels + Schwa)
- Consonant sounds
    - Voiced/Unvoiced
    - Consonant clusters (simplification/addition of vowels)

Intonation *(Melody does not hinder intelligibility* and that does not sound unenthusiastic/boring)*

- Changes pitch for grammatical purposes (Ex. Questions, Imperatives…)
- Changes pitch to represent certain attitudes and emotions
- Changes pitch to distinguish new from old information
- Changes pitch to manage conversation (Ex. turn-taking, introducing/ending topics, linking ideas…)
- Changes pitch to make certain information noticeable/prominent
- Changes pitch to mark relationship established between speakers (Dominant vs. Non-dominant speaker)

Stress and Rhythm *(Stress and rhythm does not hinder intelligibility and that does not sound even all the time)*

- Puts the stress in the right syllable of words (tonic syllable) through change of pitch + loudness + lengthening of the vowel sound in that syllable.
- Makes a noticeable contrast between stressed and unstressed syllables (making reductions when necessary)
- Puts stress only on content words (and not on grammatical words)

DESCRIPTORS FOR SCORES

1 = We have to make a big effort to understand; often incomprehensible.

2 = We have to make efforts to understand; minimally comprehensive.

3 = Pronounced foreign accent requiring extra-sympathetic listening; comprehensible.

4 = We don't have to make big efforts to understand; mispronunciation but still clear.

5 = We don't have to make any efforts to understand; there is no/very little mispronunciation and it is 100-90% comprehensible.

*Intelligibility – Ability to produce as many understandable words as possible. Since words are made up of sounds, an intelligible pronunciation implies that, even if sounds are not exactly the same, they do not change the meaning of the word. On the other hand, the ultimate objective of being intelligible is to communicate, so we must not forget that:

- We are only intelligible if we are able to communicate our intention as well.
- We should also aim at effective communication (that achieves to accomplish its goals)
- We should also aim at efficient communication (that does not entail too much effort)

Motivation questionnaires

Pre-questionnaire

CUESTIONARIO DE MOTIVACIÓN (Pre-test)

Queremos conocer tu opinión sobre las cosas que consideras importantes en tu clase de inglés y la frecuencia con la que éstas se realizan. Contesta a las siguientes cuestiones de acuerdo a esta escala:

1 – Muy en desacuerdo

2 – En desacuerdo

3 – Neutral

4 – De acuerdo

5 – Muy de acuerdo

Parte 1 – En nuestras clases de inglés, creo que es importante:

1. Que se nos recuerde constantemente la importancia de dominar el inglés, así como los beneficios que esto puede conllevar en el futuro (Ej. Conseguir un trabajo mejor o estudiar en el extranjero).	1	2	3	4	5
2. Que se espere de nosotros el alcanzar metas realistas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Que se nos den instrucciones claras sobre cómo realizar una tarea, revisando todos los pasos que hemos dar.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Estar en contacto con hablantes nativos y fomentar esta relación a través de todo tipo de medios (Ej. Usando nuevas tecnologías, a través de intercambios y visitas a países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
5. Estar en contacto con la cultura de los países y de las comunidades angloparlantes a través de cualquier medio.	1	2	3	4	5

6. Participar en proyectos significativos en los que el producto final es auténtico y puede ser divulgado posteriormente.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Que se nos faciliten ejemplos de modelos/tareas completas para que podamos ver lo que se espera de nosotros.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Romper con la rutina de clase de vez en cuando (Ej. Cambiar de sitio, cambiar el orden de las actividades en clase, cambiar el tipo de actividades, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Realizar actividades de clase que sean significativas e importantes para nosotros en ese momento y de cara al futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Realizar actividades de clase en las que se nos anime a compartir experiencias y opiniones personales.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Usar materiales originales que fomenten el uso del idioma (Ej. Videos, nuevas tecnologías, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
12. Realizar actividades de clase que nos supongan un reto y que impliquen resolver problemas o descubrir algo.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Tratar temas y contenidos interesantes como:					
- Preocupaciones e inquietudes de gente de nuestra edad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Forma de vida en otros países.	1	2	3	4	5
- Noticias de la actualidad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Celebraciones y fiestas populares.	1	2	3	4	5
- Televisión, cine y literatura.	1	2	3	4	5
- Nuestra formación/educación.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Usar los recursos existentes de distintas formas (Ej. Usar un video para responder preguntas de comprensión, para encauzar un debate, para aprender más sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
15. Realizar tareas que se ajusten a nuestro nivel y que nos permitan experimentar la sensación de éxito a menudo.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Realizar actividades que se ajusten a nuestras necesidades, metas e intereses.	1	2	3	4	5

17. Realizar actividades que representen situaciones de la vida real en las tengamos que usar el inglés en el futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Realizar actividades que nos ayuden de alguna forma a usar el inglés de forma adecuada en el futuro (Ej. Tratar con temas y contextos relevantes).	1	2	3	4	5
19. Usar productos culturales auténticos como material alternativo (Ej. Películas, grabaciones de la televisión, revistas, periódicos, canciones, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
20. Familiarizarnos con el contexto cultural del inglés para entender mejor la lengua.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Tener acceso a canales comunicativos más ricos gracias a todo tipo de ayudas auditivas y visuales (Ej. Dibujos, videos, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
22. Pasárnoslo bien mientras aprendemos el idioma (Ej. Actividades que parecen juegos).	1	2	3	4	5
23. Tener como invitados a hablantes nativos.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Realizar alguna actividad de calentamiento antes de comenzar una tarea compleja.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Tener algún lugar público (físico o virtual) donde se puedan mostrar/divulgar los proyectos de la clase.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Aprender sobre la importancia y utilidad del inglés en el mundo.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Saber más sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes y ver qué cosas tenemos en común y qué cosas no.	1	2	3	4	5

Parte 2 – En nuestras clases de inglés solemos:

1. Ver cómo se nos recuerda constantemente la importancia de dominar el inglés, así como los beneficios que esto puede conllevar en el futuro (Ej. Conseguir un trabajo mejor o estudiar en el extranjero).	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ver cómo se espera de nosotros el alcanzar metas realistas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Recibir instrucciones claras sobre cómo realizar una tarea y revisar todos los pasos que hemos dar.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Estar en contacto con hablantes nativos a través de todo tipo de medios (Ej. Usando nuevas tecnologías, a través de intercambios y visitas a países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
5. Estar en contacto con la cultura de los países y de las comunidades angloparlantes a través de cualquier medio.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Participar en proyectos significativos en los que el producto final es auténtico y puede ser divulgado posteriormente.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Recibir ejemplos de modelos/tareas completas para que podamos ver lo que se espera de nosotros.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Romper con la rutina de clase de vez en cuando (Ej. Cambiar de sitio, cambiar el orden de las actividades en clase, cambiar el tipo de actividades, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Realizar actividades de clase significativas e importantes para nosotros en este momento y de cara al futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Realizar actividades de clase en las que se nos anima a compartir experiencias y opiniones personales.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Usar materiales originales que fomentan el uso del idioma (Ej. Videos, nuevas tecnologías, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
12. Realizar actividades de clase que nos suponen un reto y que implican resolver problemas o descubrir algo.	1	2	3	4	5

13. Tratar temas y contenidos interesantes como:					
- Preocupaciones e inquietudes de gente de nuestra edad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Forma de vida en otros países.	1	2	3	4	5
- Noticias de la actualidad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Celebraciones y fiestas populares.	1	2	3	4	5
- Televisión, cine y literatura.	1	2	3	4	5
- Nuestra formación/educación.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Usar los recursos existentes de distintas formas (Ej. Usar un video para responder preguntas de comprensión, para encauzar un debate, para aprender más sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
15. Realizar tareas que se ajustan a nuestro nivel y que nos permiten experimentar la sensación de éxito a menudo.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Realizar actividades que se ajustan a nuestras necesidades, metas e intereses.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Realizar actividades que representan situaciones de la vida real en las tendremos que usar el inglés en el futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Realizar actividades que nos ayudarán de alguna forma a usar el inglés de forma adecuada en el futuro (Ej. Tratar con temas y contextos relevantes).	1	2	3	4	5
19. Usar productos culturales auténticos como material alternativo (Ej. Películas, grabaciones de la televisión, revistas, periódicos, canciones, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
20. Familiarizarnos con el contexto cultural del inglés para entender mejor la lengua.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Tener acceso a canales comunicativos más ricos gracias a todo tipo de ayudas auditivas y visuales (Ej. Dibujos, videos, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
22. Pasárnoslo bien mientras aprendemos el idioma (Ej. Actividades que parecen juegos).	1	2	3	4	5
23. Tener como invitados a hablantes nativos.	1	2	3	4	5

24. Realizar alguna actividad de calentamiento antes de comenzar una tarea compleja.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Contar con algún lugar público (físico o virtual) donde se pueden mostrar/divulgar los proyectos de la clase.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Aprender sobre la importancia y utilidad del inglés en el mundo.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Aprender sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes y reflexionar qué cosas tenemos en común y qué cosas no.	1	2	3	4	5

Post-questionnaire – School 1

CUESTIONARIO DE MOTIVACIÓN (Pre-test)

Queremos conocer tu opinión sobre las cosas que consideras importantes en tu clase de inglés y la frecuencia con la que éstas se realizan. Contesta a las siguientes cuestiones de acuerdo a esta escala:

1 – Muy en desacuerdo

2 – En desacuerdo

3 – Neutral

4 – De acuerdo

5 – Muy de acuerdo

Parte 1 – En nuestras clases de inglés, creo que es importante:

1. Que se nos recuerde constantemente la importancia de dominar el inglés, así como los beneficios que esto puede conllevar en el futuro (Ej. Conseguir un trabajo mejor o estudiar en el extranjero).	1	2	3	4	5
2. Que se espere de nosotros el alcanzar metas realistas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Que se nos den instrucciones claras sobre cómo realizar una tarea, revisando todos los pasos que hemos dar.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Estar en contacto con hablantes nativos y fomentar esta relación a través de todo tipo de medios (Ej. Usando nuevas tecnologías, a través de intercambios y visitas a países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
5. Estar en contacto con la cultura de los países y de las comunidades angloparlantes a través de cualquier medio.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Participar en proyectos significativos en los que el producto final es auténtico y puede ser divulgado posteriormente.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Que se nos faciliten ejemplos de modelos/tareas completas para que podamos ver lo que se espera	1	2	3	4	5

de nosotros.

8. Romper con la rutina de clase de vez en cuando (Ej. Cambiar de sitio, cambiar el orden de las actividades en clase, cambiar el tipo de actividades, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Realizar actividades de clase que sean significativas e importantes para nosotros en ese momento y de cara al futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Realizar actividades de clase en las que se nos anime a compartir experiencias y opiniones personales.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Usar materiales originales que fomenten el uso del idioma (Ej. Videos, nuevas tecnologías, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
12. Realizar actividades de clase que nos supongan un reto y que impliquen resolver problemas o descubrir algo.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Tratar temas y contenidos interesantes como:					
- Preocupaciones e inquietudes de gente de nuestra edad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Forma de vida en otros países.	1	2	3	4	5
- Noticias de la actualidad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Celebraciones y fiestas populares.	1	2	3	4	5
- Televisión, cine y literatura.	1	2	3	4	5
- Nuestra formación/educación.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Usar los recursos existentes de distintas formas (Ej. Usar un video para responder preguntas de comprensión, para encauzar un debate, para aprender más sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
15. Realizar tareas que se ajusten a nuestro nivel y que nos permitan experimentar la sensación de éxito a menudo.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Realizar actividades que se ajusten a nuestras necesidades, metas e intereses.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Realizar actividades que representen situaciones de la vida real en las tengamos que usar el inglés en el futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Realizar actividades que nos ayuden de alguna forma a usar el inglés de forma adecuada en el futuro (Ej. Tratar con temas y contextos relevantes).	1	2	3	4	5

19. Usar productos culturales auténticos como material alternativo (Ej. Películas, grabaciones de la televisión, revistas, periódicos, canciones, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
20. Familiarizarnos con el contexto cultural del inglés para entender mejor la lengua.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Tener acceso a canales comunicativos más ricos gracias a todo tipo de ayudas auditivas y visuales (Ej. Dibujos, videos, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
22. Pasárnoslo bien mientras aprendemos el idioma (Ej. Actividades que parecen juegos).	1	2	3	4	5
23. Tener como invitados a hablantes nativos.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Realizar alguna actividad de calentamiento antes de comenzar una tarea compleja.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Tener algún lugar público (físico o virtual) donde se puedan mostrar/divulgar los proyectos de la clase.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Aprender sobre la importancia y utilidad del inglés en el mundo.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Saber más sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes y ver qué cosas tenemos en común y qué cosas no.	1	2	3	4	5

Parte 2 – En nuestras clases de inglés solemos:

1. Ver cómo se nos recuerda constantemente la importancia de dominar el inglés, así como los beneficios que esto puede conllevar en el futuro (Ej. Conseguir un trabajo mejor o estudiar en el extranjero).	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ver cómo se espera de nosotros el alcanzar metas realistas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Recibir instrucciones claras sobre cómo realizar una tarea y revisar todos los pasos que hemos dar.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Estar en contacto con hablantes nativos a través de todo tipo de medios (Ej. Usando nuevas tecnologías, a través de intercambios y visitas a países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
5. Estar en contacto con la cultura de los países y de las comunidades angloparlantes a través de cualquier medio.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Participar en proyectos significativos en los que el producto final es auténtico y puede ser divulgado posteriormente.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Recibir ejemplos de modelos/tareas completas para que podamos ver lo que se espera de nosotros.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Romper con la rutina de clase de vez en cuando (Ej. Cambiar de sitio, cambiar el orden de las actividades en clase, cambiar el tipo de actividades, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Realizar actividades de clase significativas e importantes para nosotros en este momento y de cara al futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Realizar actividades de clase en las que se nos anima a compartir experiencias y opiniones personales.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Usar materiales originales que fomentan el uso del idioma (Ej. Videos, nuevas tecnologías, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
12. Realizar actividades de clase que nos suponen un reto y que implican resolver problemas o descubrir algo.	1	2	3	4	5

13. Tratar temas y contenidos interesantes como:					
- Preocupaciones e inquietudes de gente de nuestra edad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Forma de vida en otros países.	1	2	3	4	5
- Noticias de la actualidad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Celebraciones y fiestas populares.	1	2	3	4	5
- Televisión, cine y literatura.	1	2	3	4	5
- Nuestra formación/educación.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Usar los recursos existentes de distintas formas (Ej. Usar un video para responder preguntas de comprensión, para encauzar un debate, para aprender más sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
15. Realizar tareas que se ajustan a nuestro nivel y que nos permiten experimentar la sensación de éxito a menudo.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Realizar actividades que se ajustan a nuestras necesidades, metas e intereses.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Realizar actividades que representan situaciones de la vida real en las tendremos que usar el inglés en el futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Realizar actividades que nos ayudarán de alguna forma a usar el inglés de forma adecuada en el futuro (Ej. Tratar con temas y contextos relevantes).	1	2	3	4	5
19. Usar productos culturales auténticos como material alternativo (Ej. Películas, grabaciones de la televisión, revistas, periódicos, canciones, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
20. Familiarizarnos con el contexto cultural del inglés para entender mejor la lengua.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Tener acceso a canales comunicativos más ricos gracias a todo tipo de ayudas auditivas y visuales (Ej. Dibujos, videos, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
22. Pasárnoslo bien mientras aprendemos el idioma (Ej. Actividades que parecen juegos).	1	2	3	4	5
23. Tener como invitados a hablantes nativos.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Realizar alguna actividad de calentamiento antes de comenzar una tarea compleja.	1	2	3	4	5

25. Contar con algún lugar público (físico o virtual) donde se pueden mostrar/divulgar los proyectos de la clase.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Aprender sobre la importancia y utilidad del inglés en el mundo.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Aprender sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes y reflexionar qué cosas tenemos en común y qué cosas no.	1	2	3	4	5

Post-questionnaire – School 2

CUESTIONARIO DE MOTIVACIÓN (Post-test)

Queremos conocer tu opinión sobre las actividades que has realizado durante este estudio.
Contesta a las siguientes cuestiones de acuerdo a esta escala:

1 – Muy en desacuerdo

2 – En desacuerdo

3 – Neutral

4 – De acuerdo

5 – Muy de acuerdo

Parte 1 Las actividades realizadas me han parecido buenas a la hora de desarrollar mis habilidades orales:

1. **Activity 1** – News Broadcast
   a. *Listening* (comprensión auditiva) 1 2 3 4 5
   b. *Speaking* (producción oral) 1 2 3 4 5
   c. Pronunciación, entonación y ritmo 1 2 3 4 5

2. **Activity 2** – A debate
   a. *Listening* (comprensión auditiva) 1 2 3 4 5
   b. *Speaking* (producción oral) 1 2 3 4 5
   c. Pronunciación, entonación y ritmo 1 2 3 4 5

3. **Activity 3** – A Short Story
   a. *Listening* (comprensión auditiva) 1 2 3 4 5
   b. *Speaking* (producción oral) 1 2 3 4 5
   c. Pronunciación, entonación y ritmo 1 2 3 4 5

4. **Activity 4** – Radio Commercials
   a. *Listening* (comprensión auditiva) 1 2 3 4 5
   b. *Speaking* (producción oral) 1 2 3 4 5
   c. Pronunciación, entonación y ritmo 1 2 3 4 5

Parte 2 En la realización de las actividades de este estudio, estas son las metas que hemos alcanzado:

1. Hemos conseguido ser más conscientes de la importancia de dominar el inglés, así como de los beneficios que esto puede conllevar en el futuro (Ej. Conseguir un trabajo mejor o estudiar en el extranjero).	1	2	3	4	5
2. Hemos alcanzado metas realistas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Hemos recibido instrucciones claras sobre cómo realizar las tareas, revisando todos los pasos que debíamos dar.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Hemos estado en contacto con hablantes nativos y hemos fomentado esta relación a través de todo tipo de medios (Ej. Usando nuevas tecnologías, a través de intercambios y visitas a países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
5. Hemos estado en contacto con la cultura de los países y de las comunidades angloparlantes a través de todo tipo de medios.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Hemos participado en proyectos significativos en los que el producto final era auténtico y podía ser divulgado posteriormente.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Hemos recibido ejemplos de modelos/tareas completas que nos permitieron ver lo que se esperaba de nosotros.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Hemos roto con la rutina de clase (Ej. Cambiar de sitio, cambiar el orden de las actividades en clase, cambiar el tipo de actividades, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Hemos realizado actividades de clase significativas e importantes para nosotros en este momento y de cara al futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Hemos realizado actividades de clase en las que se nos ha animado a compartir experiencias y opiniones personales.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Hemos usado materiales originales que fomentaban el uso del idioma (Ej. Videos, nuevas tecnologías, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5

12. Hemos realizado actividades de clase que nos supusieron un reto y que implicaron resolver problemas o descubrir algo.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Hemos tratado temas y contenidos como:					
- Preocupaciones e inquietudes de gente de nuestra edad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Forma de vida en otros países.	1	2	3	4	5
- Noticias de la actualidad.	1	2	3	4	5
- Celebraciones y fiestas populares.	1	2	3	4	5
- Televisión, cine y literatura.	1	2	3	4	5
- Nuestra formación/educación.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Hemos usado los recursos que teníamos de distintas formas (Ej. Usar un video para responder preguntas de comprensión, para encauzar un debate, para aprender más sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
15. Hemos realizado tareas que se ajustaban a nuestro nivel y que nos permitieron experimentar la sensación de éxito a menudo.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Hemos realizado actividades que se ajustaban a nuestras necesidades, metas e intereses.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Hemos realizado actividades que representaban situaciones de la vida real en las tendremos que usar el inglés en el futuro.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Hemos realizado actividades que nos ayudarán de alguna forma a usar el inglés de forma adecuada en el futuro (Ej. Tratar con temas y contextos relevantes).	1	2	3	4	5
19. Hemos usado productos culturales auténticos como material alternativo (Ej. Películas, grabaciones de la televisión, revistas, periódicos, canciones, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
20. Nos hemos familiarizado con el contexto cultural del inglés para entender mejor la lengua.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Hemos tenido acceso a canales comunicativos más ricos gracias a todo tipo de ayudas auditivas y visuales (Ej. Dibujos, videos, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
22. Nos lo hemos pasado bien mientras aprendíamos el idioma (Ej. Actividades que parecen juegos).	1	2	3	4	5

23. Hemos tenido como invitados a hablantes nativos.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Hemos realizado alguna actividad de calentamiento antes de comenzar una tarea compleja.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Hemos dispuesto de un lugar público (físico o virtual) donde se podían mostrar/divulgar los proyectos de la clase.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Hemos aprendido sobre la importancia y la utilidad del inglés en el mundo.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Hemos aprendido más sobre la cultura de los países angloparlantes y hemos podido ver qué cosas tenemos en común y qué cosas no.	1	2	3	4	5